■ NEWS/A3
GMA to preside over Security Council summit attended by Bush, Blair, other leaders

■ WORLD/A8
Richest nation struggles to cope with Katrina's destruction

■ LIFESTYLE
Fr. Jerry Orbos, Korean visionary to team up for Day of Healing Sept. 11

■ SIM
Life may be a drag, but there's always Helen Cruz

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Sunday
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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'Jueteng' cash for bishops, it's help; for mayors, a bribe

By Jerry E. Esplanada

'Tent of Hope' to pave way for new level of protests

By Luige A. del Puerto

It's moral, bishop insists

Capalla sees nothing wrong with taking gambling money

By Christian V. Esguerra, Jhunnex Napallacan and Tonette Orejas

DAVAO CITY—Archbishop Fernando Capalla sees nothing wrong with the Church receiving cash donations from state-run gambling operations, especially if these directly benefit the poor.

"The principle of morality does not apply in this situation," the bluntspoken cold reputator yesterday in reaction to allegations that he and two other archbishops had received donations from the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (today Cruz P600,000 to P700 million.

"My conscience is clear," he said.

A source in Davao had earlier named Capalla—along with Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal and Archbishop Pedro Arigo of San Fernando, Pampanga—as having received cash donations taken from the "intelligence fund" of Puerto Ghair Efraim Genuino.

In 2003 alone, the three bishops and two others, 42 priests and monsignori and 14 religious groups received a total of P9,595,000 as Christmas "cash gifts," according to Pagcor documents furnished by the source.

Capalla, outgoing president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, denied receiving such big amounts as Christmas gifts from Pagcor, but he said he had received donations entered through the Pagcor office in Davao.

In the past, too, he said, Church "institutions and personalities" received similar donations, with bishops serving only as "conduits."

At present, the Church relies requests directly to Pagcor, and the agency sends donations usually to the bishop of choice to the center, he said.

Quoting Vidal, Capalla said: "I'd rather be criticized than let the poor die of sickness or hunger."

Asked why in Antioch, outside Pagcor officials hall: "Bahr manalapan" containing different amounts of "money" on the bishops' desks on July at the end of their retreat and as they prepared for their annual conference in Tagaytay City.

He said the incident happened before the CBCP named its statements on the political crisis branding Mrs. Arroyo.

Asked to did not join the conference because he had to leave for the United States to officiate at the wedding of a niece.

In the statement issued on July 10, the CBCP chose not to support calls for the people's resignation on the basis of the

THE MOMENT victory is becoming so elusive as the Yamashita gold, but to Mr. Jose Jose-old Domingo Pelagio, the memory is unfading, unforgettable. He still lives where he saw it happen in his native Rizal, Bagac. He witnessed what no Filipino has supposed to see by order of the 25 millions.

Last man alive who saw Yamashita surrender

By Veh Contreras

A BROTHERHOOD forged in battle 60 years ago. PFW's 2nd Chief Cooke Yori Ito and Jaemag's Sgt. Cutsie Pucks bear the colors at ribbon-cutting the end of PFWE at Camp John Hay in Baguio on Saturday.

RP, Red Cross to help Katrina's victims

SEVERAL SPIRIT is alive and well in the US. You're welcome to use our empty apartment for free. Mr. Ann couple Ron Ongsco (standing) and his wife Susan (seated, left) of Houston, Texas, volunteered to give their time. From left, Theresa Soto, Celeste Bee, Jackie Pineda Soto, Kate Soto, Cathy Sugar, Ramir Bite, Dominick Star and Philip Tindi. The Filipino community in Houston is helping evacuee Pinoys in New Orleans.

THE PHILIPPINES is pushing to help the hurricane-ravaged US Gulf Coast with the deployment of a 25-member humanitarian team ordered by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The first batch of 18 doctors, nurses and sanitary engineers will leave for the United States this week, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

He said the President decided to send a team to the United States because she considered that country as ally that had "never hesitated" to help the Philippines in times of disaster.

Mr. Bunye has also appealed to the more than two million Filipinos in the United States, particularly doctors, nurses and engineers, to contribute whatever they can to the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

The Philippine Red Cross is doing its share.

Sen. Richard Gordon, chair of the PRRC, said it would send

Soldier discovers God in battle, turns priest

By Christian V. Esguerra

IT'S NEVER too late to find God.

The late Jaime Cardinal Sin, who would have turned 77 last Wednesday, had this in mind when he put up the Holy Apostolic Senior Seminary (HASS), a special school mainly for professionals studying for the priesthood. It's the only one of its kind in Asia.

Since 1985, the school has produced 56 priests, including a bishop. Sin had for a company seminary of priests that there's only one for every 15,000 faithful.

Over the years, the school has had lawyers, doctors, accountants, engineers, businessmen and psychologists as priestly scholastics.

When he was still alive, he took pride in having produced a

A3
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2005

WEATHER FORECAST

CIRCUIT: Sectored feather's pier. Hazel and Mindoro will have cloudy skies with scattered showers on Monday, while the rest of Luzon and Visayas will experience cloudy skies with isolated rains on Tuesday and Wednesday. PAGAS Weather

Second FRONTPAGE

Opposition: Pro-GMA camp serving up cash and threats

By Philip C. Tubeza and Blanche S. Rivera

ARMED with bags of cash and using threats of political retribution, administration officials are making house-calls on key congressmen to ensure that President Macapagal-Arroyo survives the impeachment battle in the House, opposition lawmakers said yesterday.

The targets of the alleged house-to-house campaign are the House members who have signed the impeachment complaint as well as a number of the 10 to 15 administration lawmakers whose signatures would give the pro-impeachment camp the 79 votes needed to put Mr Arroyo on trial in the Senate, they said.

Deputy Majority Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano and House Minority Leader Francis Escudero said Cabinet officials armed with money "bags," had visited lawmakers in their homes to convince them to support Speaker Jose de Venecia's impeachment bid.

Besides the 72 actual or pledged signatures which his backers have claimed, de Venecia has secured 58 to 73 administration lawmakers have promised to vote against the House justice committee report junking the amended complaint against the President, Cayetano said.

He said Escudero said they expected the crucial vote to come on Tuesday and had set the "new hours of Wednesday morning."

Cayetano and Escudero made their claims after Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay told the Inquirer on Friday that some opposition to the impeachment would either withdraw their signatures or not attend the plenary vote.

"We had an unwritten meeting and it was confirmed by two of our colleagues that government officials were asking our signatures not to go [to Congress] from Monday to Wednesday," Cayetano said.

"They were offering cash and the fantasy would be given their cash down if they agreed."

He said the statements included office of foreign trips for the congressmen and their families.

Cayetano added: "This only shows that the administration is already panicking and is doing everything to prevent the complaint from going to the Senate. It also shows that the administration is not only guilty but that it is also willing to break the law and destroy institutions to get away it wants."

Cayetano said the government officials involved in the supposed operation were known to the congressmen since they came from agencies that either implemented the lawmakers' pet projects or were involved in their "advocacy."

Cayetano and two administration lawmakers first reported the offers after they refused them.

Escudero, however, said that the primary targets of the "buycott" campaign were the 10 lawmakers whose names were already publicly known after they signed the amended complaint.

"They are being told that they don't have to withdraw their signatures and they need to be absent," Escudero said.

"We are so confident that they would refuse. We have a high regard for our colleagues and they will vote to the plenary against the committee report. We have no doubts about their resolve."

While Escudero was confident about the 58 signatories, Cayetano was concerned about the group of 10-15 administration lawmakers because their vote—besides the offers of cash—an alleged implied threat of withdrawal of if they rest of against the committee report.

"They are given the feeling that the administration is going to last until 2004 and that it controls the police and other agencies," Cayetano said.

He said the pro-impeachment camp was also trying to confirm if the same tactics were being used on the opposition members....Zaldarian Representatives Luis Asiano and Isaac Mahipus, Magsaysay Rep. Raymond Democrito Mendoza, Iloilo Rep. Augusto Syjuco Jr. and Quezon City Rep. Vicente "Bingbong" Crisologo...who have yet to sign the complaint.

With the 10-15 administration lawmakers and the five opposition members, the pro-impeachment camp would have a "pretty good chance" of getting the 79 votes, Cayetano said.

"We are so sure," Cayetano quoted San Juan Rep. Ronaldo Zamora—supposedly the only person who knows the exact number of complaint opponents—as saying during their assessment meeting.

Already, a former aide of Mr Arroyo is fuming in the court for his opposition colleagues in the House.

With Aided Salvo in Cebu

ALONE Hanning draws her degree by panning a huge photo of the President.

Urban poor leader has no use for GMA, Cory, Susan, Hyatt 10

LIKE former President Corazon Aquino, Susan Roces and the so-called Hyatt 10, Kadamay (Kilusang Mayo Uno) wants to bring down President Macapagal-Arroyo.

But though she may be on the same side as them, Dominia has no use for figures. Roces and the 10 Cabinet members who resigned in protest to the anti-Arroyo movement.

"They are all plastic," said Dominia, an urban poor leader and agitator to the impeachment complaint against the President, at the launch of the Clean Hay Lenni Movement (CHM) at the Quezon City Sports Club yesterday.

Dominia claimed that Aquino had joined the pro-impeachment group to "screw up the deals" about Hacienda Luisita," the Aquino family sugar estate where more than 10 workers were killed by policemen in a strike last year.

Roces, a former movie star, was only interested in the presidency which ended her husband, the late presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr., said Dominia, 77, a veteran of the anti-Marcos and anti-Aquino movements.

As for the former members of the Hyatt 10, the Arroyo government officials who turned against the President and are likely to be among the witnesses against Mr Arroyo if she is impeached and the case goes to trial in the Senate.

"No, not one of them is worth bothering about," Dominia, the chair of the Kadamay urban poor group, said in Filipino.

Dominia was among the signatories to the amended impeachment complaint filed on July 25 which the House committee on justice threw out last week, along with two other complaints.

The committee's members who love in the Lovenia claims with her junior son, Dominia said she was "disappointed" by the decision of the House justice committee to throw out the complaints.

She said other aims also unhappy with the House members who refused to sign the impeachment complaints, or who took back their signatures after they were allegedly offered money by allies of Ms Arroyo.

"It's not principle that prevails but money. They did not even think about the country's interest," she said in Filipino.

Dominia said Ms Arroyo should've resigned "as a symptom to sound of responsibility "who are accountable to the people."

By R. Jamcon

Bigots, Lagman calls former party mates

By Blanche S. Rivera

BOLSTERED by resigned and was not expelled from the Akbayan Bridebuilder party, Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman had been lashing words for his former party mates.

"What legend Akbayan Sen. Loi Ejercito Estrada left, they should be trying to keep their members," Lagman said yesterday.

Bulatao, who took the Isabela governorship in a landslide victory in 2004, quit Akbayan last year after a falling out with the party.

The party, founded by the late Raul Roco, announced its decision only days after Lagman expelled Lagman because of his defection from Akbayan's official stand to support the impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Lagman, who spoke at the Iloilo Hotel forum yesterday, also hinted that there was no official Akbayan party stand on the impeachment.

He said the position of Roco, who was among the first to call for the ouster of President's resignation when he was still alive, did not constitute the party stand.

"With all due respect, Roco's stand was his own. If they wanted to have a party stand, they should've had a party congress. Nothing there was none," said Lagman.

He said he had spoken with "high-profile" Akbayan members, including the party's former secretary-general, and they confirmed that the party did not have an official stand on the impeachment.

Akbayan secretary-general Leo Lagman announced the expulsion of Lagman the other day, saying his actions during public statements violated the conservatives of Akbayan.

Fuel prices up by 50c

QUEZON CITY (MB) Filipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Caltex Philippines Inc., Petron Corp. and Total (Philippines) Corp. yesterday raised the pump prices of gasoline by 50 centavos per liter and kerosene by 50 centavos per kilogram.

Shell effected its price hike at 6 a.m., followed by Caltex at noon and Total at 6 p.m.

Petron raised its prices at 12:01 a.m. today while new prices of Unocal Philippines Corp. picked up its prices at 6 a.m. Friday. It would follow suit at 12:01 a.m. tomorrow.

However, prices of the usually sensitive diesel and kerosene remained unchanged.

The oil firms cited the spike in regional unleaded gasoline prices and international liquefied petroleum gas contract prices as the reason for the price increase.

Petroleum unleaded gasoline now retails in between P33.05 to P34.65 a liter, diesel in between P29.79 to P31.40 a liter, kerosene in between P30.94 to P32.58 a liter, and LPG in between P372.50 to P423.18 per 11-kilogram cylinder.

In the developed, Petron Corp. yesterday clarified that nearly 20 percent of its could per income of P5.73 billion in 2004 to the first half of 2005 was derived from its sales in the export market.

Petron said that of its P2.82 billion net income in 2004, P1.58 billion came from export sales. Of its P1.29 billion income in the first half of 2005, exports accounted for P776 million, it said.

Abigail L. Ito

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Fuel prices up by 50c

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Abigail L. Ito

GMA to preside over UN summit of world leaders

By Nikko Dizon

LEADERS of the 15 countries in the United Nation's powerful Security Council have agreed to meet on ways to stop terrorism and other armed conflicts, and President Macapagal-Arroyo is to preside over the Sept. 14 summit in New York, the Philippines' top diplomat at the UN said yesterday.

"The Philippines scored a major diplomatic coup today when the Security Council gave the go-ahead for the convening of a historic summit that will bring together the leaders of the 15 member-states that make up the most powerful organ of the United Nations," Ambassador Lauro Baja Jr., the Philippines' Permanent Representative to the UN, said in an e-mail to local media.

Baja, this month's Security Council president, said this came after members of the powerful organ, in closed-door consultations Friday morning, unanimously approved the work program for September. The Philippines currently chairs the Security Council.

"Delegations attending the summit as a coup for the Philippine presidency since several selected presidents had tried to convene summits of the council before," Baja said.

The meeting will be attended by US President George W. Bush, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Russian President Vladimir Putin, French President Jacques Chirac, Chinese President Hu Jintao and the leaders of Algeria, Argentina, Benin, Brazil, Denmark, Greece, Japan, Romania and Tanzania.

"With the approval of the meeting's agenda, the themes developed by resolutions and a decree of implementation at home, 'is well on her way to becoming the first Filipino President, the first Asian head of state and the first woman leader to preside over a summit of the Security Council," Baja said.

According to Baja, this would be the third Security Council summit in the UN's history. The first, in 1992, was chaired by then British Prime Minister John Major and the second, held in 2000, was presided over by then President Alpha Oumar Konare of Mali.

"I'm glad we were successful in the first round. The bigger challenge ahead is the negotiations on the outcome documents," Baja said.

The envoy said the Security Council would be working on two days' resolutions: Britain's appeal to all nations to ban incitement of terrorist actions and another draft on the prevention of conflicts tabled by Algeria, Benin and Tanzania.

The British draft resolution, which comes on the heels of terror attacks in the British capital, calls on countries to take appropriate measures to prevent "violent extremist ideologies, including steps to prevent the subversion of educational, cultural and religious institutions by terrorists and their supporters."

The Security Council meeting will coincide with the opening of a three-day UN world summit to be attended by more than 170 world leaders. The meeting may also be asked to address both terrorism and conflict prevention in a final document. But the present 39-page draft is still under intense negotiations and serious differences remain on virtually all key issues. With reports from AP and Reuters

Bill filed vs 'pushy' telcos

ATTRACTIVE on complaints from cellular phone subscribers, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago has filed a bill seeking to penalize telecommunications companies for "unsought services" which can eat up subscribers' phone credits.

Senate Bill No. 2006, or the "Unsought Cellular Mobile Phone Services Act of 2005," proposes that phone companies found guilty of intentionally charging their subscribers for unsought services that reduce their prepaid credit or increase the postpaid credit of subscribers be slapped with a P1-million fine or have their permits suspended or revoked.

"Numerous complaints have reached my office regarding the propensity of telecom companies to leverage their subscribers with unwanted services such as ringing tones, polyphonic tones and video and picture messages, and then automatically charging them to their subscribers," Santiago said.

"We must put a stop to this scam. Not connected with the billions of pesos in profits they make annually these telecom companies still have the nerve to abuse consumers," she said.

Santiago said the subscribers have the right to freely decide how they want to spend their credits. She noted that the bulk of prepaid mobile phone users come from the middle and low income classes.

The senator said the bill was prepared with her by four college students who were undergoing internship in her office's 2005 Summer Intern Program.

The students were Nerissa Francisco of the College of St. Benilde; Andel Ruanto of Far Eastern University; Ingrid Marie Jocelyn of New Era University and Shamael Rayne Fontano of the Jose de Rizalista University. Isabel Laforga-Arellano

Gloria's Saudi Arabia trip hangs

MIRIS the impeachment process went into its crucial stage the past few days, President Macapagal-Arroyo has been hard put to stick to her daily schedule.

Yesterday, Malacañang disclosed that the President was seriously reconsidering plans to fly to Saudi Arabia next week before going to New York to preside over the United Nations Security Council summit on Sept. 14.

In a text message, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the President's Saudi Arabia trip, scheduled for Sept. 11, "might be rescheduled to after the UN visit."

Bunye did not give any reason for the possible postponement of what would have been the President's first official state visit since the visiting warrant broke out in June.

The House of Representatives is expected to come up with a final vote this week on the impeachment complaint against the President.

Even after the House Justice committee resolved to kill the impeachment complaint, the outcome of the week's events remains uncertain, including whether the opposition would come up with the minimum 79 signatures needed to impeach or how the public would react to the defeat of the impeachment complaint.

The President was planning to discuss the status of overseas Filipino workers in Saudi Arabia, the application of the Philippines for observer status in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the warring parties of all.

Saudi Arabia is one of the Philippines' biggest sources of oil and the state-owned Saudi Arabian Oil Co. (Aramco) is the government's partner in Malaya.

The President's US trip, however, remained on schedule, Bunye said.

"This is an important trip because it is now that our country will preside over such an important UN body. It is an international obligation that she has to make," he said. With Cathy Rodriguez

The Dementia Society of the Philippines
And its Allied Specialist Group

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PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

RP, Red Cross to help Katrina's victims

From page A1

$25,000 to aid to the hurricane victims and would start a fund drive for them.

"We are answering the call to help our brothers who have been devastated by affected by this disaster," Gordon said in a statement, adding that the money would be sent through the American Red Cross.

Gordon said he would also send medical and your rescuma corps debarking teams if requested by American Red Cross authorities.

He recalled that the American Red Cross had saved thousand old and relief measures in the Philippines in times of need.

1,000 doctors, nurses

Speaker Jose de Venecia said the government was considering sending a contingent of 1,000 Filipino doctors and nurses "if needed to augment US needs."

He also proposed sending a team of 50 Filipino oil industry engineers and technicians "if needed in the efforts to restore and rebuild" damaged oil rigs and refineries along the US Gulf Coast.

He said he agreed to Petron Corp. Nick Aquino's and Philippine National Oil Co. president Ed Malaluan to determine how Filipino experts could be mobilized.

De Venecia said the President had directed Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo and Philippine Ambassador to the United States Albert del Rosario to work out the mechanics of "mobilizing Filipino relief and humanitarian teams" with US federal relief efforts.

"In our global village, we all must try to extend assistance to victims of one of the worst natural disasters to hit the United States," the Speaker said in a statement.

"These efforts will be under the umbrella of relief efforts of U.S. federal and state authorities," he said.

FilAm communities

De Venecia said Romulo had begun discussions with Filipino consuls in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Houston to coordinate civic action efforts by Filipino communities.

He said businesswoman Linda Nicolas Lewis, president of the National Federation of Philippine-American Associations, had "responded to the initiative to see how US-based Filipinos could contribute to the humanitarian effort for victims in the stricken states of Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida."

De Venecia said Lewis promised "a speedy response" during a recent phone conversation.

He also said he would further discuss the efforts of Philippine humanitarian and relief aid with US Speaker Dennis Hastert and US congressmen in the stricken Gulf Coast states.

"America has done so much for the Filipino people in war and in peace—and in times of disaster and natural calamities. We must come to the aid of Americans in their hour of need," De Venecia said.

Feeling their anguish

On Thursday, Ms Arroyo issued a statement expressing sympathy for the hurricane victims.

"The Filipinos also feel the anguish the Americans are experiencing in the aftermath of the disaster. We wish the American people a speedy recovery from this calamity, and we extend their courage and sense of community in overcoming the heavy loss of precious human and human lives," she said.

Former US Presidents Bill Clinton and George Bush are leading environmental appeals for public donations to help the hurricane victims.

It is a reprisal of the two ex-presidents' fundraising efforts for the victims of the tsunami that struck nations along the Indian Ocean last year.

Not expecting much

Various countries, including Canada, Venezuela, France, Germany and Italy have pledged to use assistance to the hurricane victims.

But US President George W Bush has been quoted as saying: "I'm not expecting much from foreign nations because we haven't asked for it. We love help, but we are going to take care of our own business as well." Reports from Ed Cabuenagan Jr., Philip C. Tubeza, AP

'Tent of Hope' to pave . . .

From page A1

"We're talking to bishops, clergymen, the academe and the laity," said Nicanor Perlas, a convenor of the Bonifacio E. coalition that helped bring down Joseph Estrada and is now barking to oust Macapagal-Arroyo.

"We're planning mass mobilizations," he said.

Depending upon what will finally happen in the impeachment complaint, Perlas said their protest might ultimately involve civil disobedience.

"It is nonviolent, but civil disobedience still represents the ultimate dispel or other those in power are doing," he told the Inquirer yesterday.

The group, which includes actress/comedienne Eddie Gutierrez and Raul "Pol" Fernandez, set up the tent at the foot of the People Power monument along Edsa two months ago to dramatize their opposition to Ms Arroyo following allegations that she was involved in electoral fraud and that members of her family took "jueteng" bribes.

Earlier that day, the tent is seen protests, the mainly middle-class men and women of the Bahay ng Pagasa ("Tent of Hope") has resorted to prayers and fasting for solutions to the country's political woes.

Their argument is that a government struggle must first be won for the political struggle to be won.

The other day the group called upon the public to fight six candidates at 6 p.m. every day and pray that the house congressmen sign the impeachment complaint against Ms Arroyo.

"Six at six" project

Hence, the "six at six" project.

The opposition has insisted it has already secured 73 votes, six short of the number needed to transmit the impeachment complaint to the Senate and put Ms Arroyo on trial.

Perlas said his group would try to identify the institutions or corporations allied with, or owned and influenced by, the government and where the time came, call upon the public to boycott them.

"What is good with civil disobedience is that you can do that in the privacy of your home. You simply boycott everything that has to do with government. You boycott everything that has to do with Davao," he said.

Perlas said if the impeachment complaint were crushed—and the group feels nothing less than a miracle would keep it alive—the people would be left with very few alternatives.

In fact, he said, several people/groups he considered "conservative" had begun expressing their frustration at the way things were turning out.

He has called on the bishops to withdraw their support.

"It was clear from their statement that they endorsed an impeachment," he said. "It is now time for them to take another stand."

A people's court

If the impeachment case should finally collapse, the group will set up a "People's Tribunal," according to Perlas.

"We're talking to opposition congressmen and people's organizations on the idea. We will proceed bring their evidence [against Ms Arroyo] directly to the people."

Perlas said it was now evident that Ms Arroyo never wanted to be tried in any court, much less an impeachment tribunal. He said she had sought to ensure the impression that she wanted her day in court but that she did not really want it.

"She has, in fact, employed tactics to wiggle out of her troubles and fend off the political heat, Perlas added.

She never really wanted to come clean, he said.

"She would say that but actually do something different, creating impressions she never followed through," Perlas said.

He said proof of this was the way pro-administration congressmen had handled the debates in the impeachment hearings.

"Their arguments were shallow and illogical; it was disgusting hearing them. Clearly, they would not listen to anything, no matter how good the arguments was," he said.

Correction

YESTERDAY'S story "Carjackers have new modus operandi," which appeared on Page A19 of the Metro Section, misstated Chief Superintendent Peter Ansenteris's car was a "Honda Trio." It should have read "Toyota."

Readers may send their responses for corrections/clarifications on our reporting to Inquirer Libis, Ortigas Office, Metrobank Plaza, Doña Julia Vargas cor. Meralco Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City; fax nos. 637-3170, 636-0916; e-mail mail@inquirer.com.ph; and mailbag@inquirer.com.ph.

Readers may also send their letters to the editor, comments, suggestions or new readers' columns, to inquirer letters, publishing the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail at them: parefor@inquirer.com.ph.

DOLE invites foreign firms to check out Pinoy workers

THE DEPARTMENT of Labor and Employment is bringing into the country foreign employers under the first International POEA Labor Opportunities Program (Dolop) to promote the quality of Filipino workers and showcase their skills and talents.

Rodolfo Demerin Reblora, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) administrator, said Dolop is an inbound marketing process designed to be a one-stop shop that puts together the various stakeholders in the overseas employment program.

These stakeholders are overseas employers, licensed recruitment agencies and Filipino professionals, workers and students, private recruitment companies and government agencies involved in human resource development.

The POEA is the lead DOLE agency tasked by Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas to organize and stage Dolop from Nov. 8 to 11 at the Philippine International Convention Center.

Reblora said Dolop consists of three components — the International Labor Mart, International Labor Opportunities Forum and the International Employers Awards.

He said the country's labor attachés would invite foreign employers to meet with local licensed recruitment agencies for possible business relationships.

The invited licensed recruitment agencies and other service providers to set up booths at the labor mart where they could make initial contact with foreign clients and match employers and candidates.

The labor forum will feature international speakers in plenary sessions on employment opportunities in Asia and the Pacific, the Americas and the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East and Africa, and the maritime industry.

The forum highlight will be a session on the hiring and documentation procedures for 90 spine workers within the legal framework.

The Dolop secretariat may be reached at tel. 722.11.97 and 726.89.15 or through dir_dimson@poea.gov.ph. The Dolop website is at www.poea.gov.ph/dolop.htm.

CREAM OF THE [TEACHING] CROP
Meralcoark Foundation Inc.'s Outstanding Teachers for 2005 received their awards yesterday from Vice President Noli de Castro and Dr. George U.K. Ty, Metrobank and Metrobank Foundation chair (center). They are, from left, Manuel C. Bolino, Gloria T. Ordoñez, Janet S. Amorino, Dr. Diana S. Aure, Maybel L. Gallicia, Amelia C. Caramanta, Vilma C. Cabrera, Julia R. Cupaling, Maria E. Alviñana and Dr. Rafael C. Bonito.

Abu sidewalk project halted

FORMER Action Power chief of staff Cesa Abu's controversial P6.5-million sidewalk upgrading project in Camp Aguinaldo has been suspended due to lack of funds, officials said.

Work on replacing the sidewalks with "decorative paving blocks," which began in April, was stopped around the time Reconstad on Aug. 15.

While most of the 2.3-km long sidewalk has been replaced with red paving blocks, portions of it were left unfinished after the original contractors was disqualified.

Some of the completed portions also need finishing. With the onset of the rainy season, this work could also be delayed.

Lt. Col. Wenceslao Pascual, AFP public information chief, said the project could not be completed since only P1 million had been released.

He said the AFP was studying out a way to fund the balance which was not included in the military's annual procurement plan (APP).

"The paperwork for the supplemental APP has not been completed on the work has to stop in the meantime," he said in a phone interview yesterday.

Jima J. Remlingan

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, September 4, 2005
22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: Ezekiel 33:7-9
A guard of one's brothers and sisters

The word of the Lord was addressed to me as follows: 'Son of man, I have set you as a watchman for Israel; and when you hear my word, you must give them my warning. When I say to the wicked: Wicked man, you shall die for sure,' if you do not warn the wicked man to turn from his ways, he will die because of his sin, but I will also call you to account for his blood. If you warn the wicked man to turn from his ways and he does not do so, he will die for his sin, but you yourself will be saved.

2nd Reading: Romans 13:8-10
Love sums up all the commandments

Brothers and sisters, do not be in debt to anyone. Let this be the only debt of yours to another: Love. The one who loves his or her neighbor fulfills the Law. So the commandments: Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not covet, and whatever other one commandment there is, this will love your neighbor as yourself. Love cannot do the neighbor any harm; so love fulfills the whole Law.

Gospel: Matthew 18:15-20
Delighting others

Jesus said to his disciples, "If your brother or sister has sinned against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are in private. And if he listens to you, you have won your brother. If you are not listened to, take with you one or two others so that the case may be decided by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he still refuses to listen to them, tell it to the assembled Church. But if he does not listen to the Church, then regard such a one as a pagan or a publican.

"I say to you: whatever you bind on earth, heaven will keep bound; and whatever you unbind on earth, heaven will keep unbound.

"In like manner, I say to you: if on earth two of you are united in asking for anything, it will be granted to you by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered in my Name, I am there among them."

Commentary

Jesus returns to the core and heart of his good news: forgiveness and reconciliation. This is a process or three levels: it, which is difficult and the other will not entertain the idea of needing to be forgiven. Next in process, one on one. Then with one or two others, trusted parties as witnesses—then to a small assembly and then treat them like a publican. But what's the rule? How does Jesus treat the public sinner? With more compassion, understanding and more forgiveness and love. His is love in practice, not to abuse them or exclude them but still forgive and seek reconciliation—this is love unto death, or love as I have loved you. And the next thing to do is pray for reconciliation—the second phase of forgiveness and healing in the body of Christ. This should be the core and heart of our prayers of public—the reconciling of all enemies, of all nations and of the world. What do we pray for when we gather?

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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2005

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Sunday SPORTS

UAAP awards victory to UE Warriors

By Jasmine N. Payo

THE UAAP technical committee decided in favor of the University of the East Warriors' protest, awarding them the victories the La Salle Archers in the UAAP basketball tournament last Thursday.

The ruling came right before UST dusted Ateneo, 77-73, yesterday in the Blue Eagle gym. The victory beat the CEP Warriors, 69-65, in the other game.

According to Atty. Felino Palafox, technical committee chair, La Salle was not entitled to a crossover in the last 1.6 seconds of regulation since the ball was already in possession of the player assigned to make the inbound. The technical foul overturned La Salle's 86-85 crossover win.

The Eagles entered a third four-slot (8-5), joining rivals semifinalists the Tamaraws (7-1) and the Warriors (6-2). The Archers (7-5) and the Maroons (6-7) are tightly contending for last seat.

In Thursday's game, the Warriors were on top, 74-73, before the Archers called a crossover, allowing Chris Villanueva to have the lastest and final two-shots period.

GAMES TODAY's Blue Eagle Gym
9:30 a.m.—Ateneo (0-14) vs. UST (14-0)
11:00 a.m.—FEU (4-10) vs. Adamson (2-12)
2 p.m.—NU (9-5) vs. UP (5-9)
4 p.m.—CEP (10-4) vs. UE (11-3)

64 Manila 23rd SEA Games

Feeling the heat

CEBU-BASED athletes will start feeling the heat.

A joint Manila-Cebu meeting from Philippine Sports Commission chairman William "Butch" Ramirez will practically cut down some of the luxuries enjoyed by members of the national training pools.

Ramirez also said he has a 24-hour national training schedule on the athletes' homes in the Cebu and the Rizal Memorial Complex, a collection of 10 percent will be enforced. The move would mean a loss over P1 million for the government.

THE PHILIPPINE Football Federation, through secretary general Dodong Gutierrez, denied that it has already decided to move the football event of the SEA Games to the Philippine Navy's Fleet City after it was found that the Manila City park did not meet international standards.

Gutierrez said in a statement that the sport's ruling body is still studying a proposal to Manila City the original two venues of football, to cover a bike lane beside the field with sod and grass to increase the size of the pitch and allow it to meet international standards. Manny Castillo

Salvador signs P7-M contract

By Jane Montero

JOHNNY Salvador was his childhood dream come true Friday night in the form of a long-term contract he signed with the Purefoods Chunkers.

An avid Alaska fan/master fan and a self-proclaimed Purefoods diehard, the 6-foot-3 power forward out of College of St. Benilde inked a multi-million contract worth at least P7 million spread in three years, players agent Ed Pinpin told the Inquirer.

"Purefoods is my favorite team ever since and my friends know it very better they picked me in the draft," said Salvador, 24, the fourth overall pick during the PBA's rookie draft last month.

"What made it even more special was [being with] Coy [Derremedios]," said the rookie winner of the 2002 MVP's trophy. "I might not be playing with him in the team but I'm excited to learn more from him."

Ped Hondo, one of two first Glen MVPs in the PBA—the other being Ingrid Ramos Pascasio—formally retired her season and now acts as the team's manager.

"With Salvador around, Purefoods Chunkers Barbecue will now have a more reliable backup center-fitting that head coach Ryan Gregorio had long been hoping for.

"Our goal is to strengthen the team's frontline," Gregorio said. "The addition of Salvador and the experienced Kerby [Raymundo] will definitely help us up on that area."

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Gov't looking to resolve Naia 3 legal issues

By Cai Ibia S. Basbas and Blanche S. Rivera

IN A BID to finally open the controversial Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3, the government is looking at various options to resolve the legal issues that have delayed its opening.

"There are legal issues and that issue is being looked at. We are pursuing a lot of options," said Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza.

A newly created oversight group now monitoring is determine whether it could allow the new majority owner of Philippine International Air Terminals Co. Inc (Piatco) to operate the airport terminal, he said.

"We are pursuing some options as we talk with the new owners of Piatco. Our goal is to open the terminal immediately," said Mendoza.

It talks go well and with the legal issues ironed out, Mendoza said the government could even open the new airport before Christmas. "Our timetable is December," he said.

Manila Hotel Corp. has acquired the 41 percent stake of Fraport AG in Piatco for $200 million. It also bought the combined 20-percent stake of Sogiti Corp. and 3M Airport Investment Corp. for $36 million.

The Cheng family is the only remaining original shareholder of Piatco.

Mendoza said he and Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita have been talking with Manila Hotel owner Emilio Yap and its president Jose Cuisia Jr. on how to open Naia 3 at the soonest.

In 2002, the Supreme Court voided the contracts of Piatco to operate Naia 3. Last year, the government took over the terminal, prompting Fraport to file an arbitration case against the government with the World Bank.

Mendoza said the government wanted to put closure to the years of dispute that have hounded Naia 3 since it was built in 2000.

Lina said they would like to operate Naia 3.

In exchange, Piatco and its shareholders would withdraw all its cases against the Philippine government. Similarly, the latter must also withdraw all cases filed against Piatco, said Lina.

"The agreement we signed with Fraport and other foreign shareholders is that they will withdraw their claims and the cases against the Philippine government upon the conclusion of the negotiation," said Lina.

The sale of Fraport shares in Piatco is a legal compromise to legal cases for the dismissal of the arbitration case Fraport filed with the World Bank. *With a report from Nikko Dizon*

SC may yet find VAT law provisions unconstitutional

By Armand N. Nocum

ALTHOUGH it has ruled that the expanded Value-Added Tax Law is constitutional, it is certain the Supreme Court may yet declare some controversial provisions of the law unconstitutional.

That possibility was raised by Supreme Court spokesperson Ismael Khan Jr. who revealed that nine justices had found 30 of 50 sections in the law "objectionable."

On Thursday, all the 15 SC justices declared Republic Act No. 9337 or the VAT law generally constitutional. But nine justices came up with separate opinions on some thorny provisions, Khan said. Six declined to issue those with dissenting opinions.

Khan said some of the justices "felt very strongly about some of the points they tried to argue for or against, leading to nine separate opinions." He said there were "intense debates among members" of the SC.

Asked about the implications of all this, Khan replied: "That will tell you that there is a basis for some of the petitioners to file a motion for reconsideration and I think they have decided to do that."

Five petitioners who questioned the constitutionality of key provisions of the VAT law have 15 days to file their motions before the court.

Khan said the contentious issues include the "undue delegation of power" to "executive authority" given to President Macapagal-Arroyo to raise the tax rate from 10 to 12 percent next year, and the duration of the transitional cooperative committee to remove the "no pass-on provisions" for fuel and power, thereby "substituting its own judgment for that of the Lower House."

Another thorny issue involves the alleged "arbitrariness, whimsical manner, oppressiveness and regressive nature of the law."

During the voting, Khan said that the objectionable provisions – including the deletion of the no-pass-on provision – got only six votes, two votes shy of the required number of votes needed to declare a provision unconstitutional.

Khan said a possible reversal of some of the thorny provisions would depend on how the five petitioners crafted their motions.

"They better be convincing enough and they should be able to advance new arguments which were never discussed before or discussed in their memoranda and arguments," he said.

Those who filed petitions to nullify the law or issue a TRO against it included Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Rep. Francis Escudero, petroleum dealers, the Makabayan Coalition party-list group and Senate Gov. Enrique Garcia.

The government is bent on implementing the VAT to generate much needed revenues to bolster its sagging finances. *With reports from Jill Gabrielle Cruz, Jr. and Christine Guevarra*

Bank workers make more, survey shows

DO YOU want to earn a high salary? Take a finance course and work in a bank.

Those working in banks and other financial institutions receive the highest monthly basic pay in the country, the Department of Labor and Employment said yesterday.

The Occupational Wages Survey of the Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics, a DOLE agency, showed that accountants, bookkeepers, auditors, budget officers, actuaries and other workers engaged in financial intermediation activities were paid the most, receiving an average P16,051 basic monthly pay.

That was almost twice the national average of P7,542 in non-agricultural industries in 2004, according to the BLES.

The survey, which was conducted in coordination with DOLE regional offices, inquired on the basic pay and allowances of "full-time workers in 6,827 non-agricultural establishments employing 10 or more persons engaged in major economic activities."

The BLES report showed that those who received the second highest monthly basic pay, at an average of P13,412, were workers in the electricity, gas and water sectors.

The third highest paid were those in the private **education sector** [P12,024], **followed by transport, storage and communication** [P10,983] and mining and quarrying (P9,119). *Jerome Aning*

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The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Ibarra

US fails first major test after Sept. 11

Prisoners fell on barbed wire in desperate bid for water

NEW ORLEANS, Louisiana — New Orleans prison inmates desperate to get water fell out of cell windows onto razor wire where they hung for hours waiting to be rescued, according to a sheriff's deputy.

Lafe Boney, who guarded a prison during Hurricane Katrina and the days after, said that some detainees drowned in their cells as flood waters rose.

Boney told how many prisoners broke out of their cells because there were just not enough guards to control the Community Correctional Center during the chaos after Monday's storm.

It took three days to evacuate the prisoners and for most of that time no food or water was given to the inmates, Boney said.

There were about 600 there to the building with 168 prisoners on each floor. The crisis reached a peak after the levees protecting New Orleans broke on Tuesday and flood water poured in.

"At one stage the inmates at the bottom had had water up to their chests. There are dead inmates in there still. When the guards were doing their last attempts there were one or two here and there," said the 23-year-old deputy.

Thousands of people are believed to have died along the US Gulf Coast following the hurricane.

Troubles erupted in the correctional center on Wednesday, according to Boney.

"The inmates said they did not want to take over the jail they just wanted food and water. We had nothing to give them because basically everything was under water."

He said that in a nearby prison building, "The inmates started jumping out of the windows onto the razor wire and they were hanging there until we could get to them.

"But the scary thing for me was running up the buildings because the inmates were breaking out of the cells and were running bodies to the walls.

"They had been ravaging throughout the night because there was no food scheduled. People just did not come in. There was no plan for this situation.

"They were banging out of the windows and trying to get water. Some of the inmates were so desperate for water that they tied their T-shirts together and lowered a knot into the drowned water that they had just relieved themselves into."

Eventually the prisoners were grouped together on a bridge where it was easier to get them to safety. But some inmates remained waiting to be rescued out of the cell.

The deadliest were sweaty, badly dehydrated and hungry.

Boney added Sheyes, who said he survived on a handful of raisins each day for five days.

"At about 10:00 a.m. five choppers descended, sinking up both sides and a spray of fluid horrible waves I rushed over to help direct traffic onto the choppers that were to take people to the airport where they would be shifted into buses.

"Should [a] before mentioning the fifth chopper, I felt good, I know eventually it would get out," he said. AFP

EVACUEES crowd the floor of the Reliant Astrodome Sept. 2 in Houston, Texas. The facility is being used to house 11,000 refugees who fled the destruction of Hurricane Katrina. Army troops rolled in to try and restore order in New Orleans on Friday, finally bringing emergency supplies for desperate survivors after days of delays and broken promises. JEFF HAYNES/AFP

Richest nation struggles to cope with Katrina wrath

WASHINGTON—The United States appears to have failed the first major test of new security arrangements since the Sept. 11 attacks as the superpower struggles to cope with the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina.

Describing images on television channels showing Americans dehydrated, hungry and unable to escape an uninhabitable New Orleans shocked the richest nation on earth as a desperate Third World nation in trouble.

Americans bombed by bad news in Iraq saw that the authorities could not quickly cope with a natural disaster at home. The New York Times said Friday as thousands were feared dead in the deadliest natural disaster in US history.

"The response you'd expect from an advanced country never happened," said Paul Krugman, a highly opinied economist from Princeton University.

"After 9/11, hard questions were delivered in the name of national unity then buried under a thick coat of whitewash. This time, we need accountability," he said.

Disaster planners were well aware that New Orleans could be flooded by the combined effects of a hurricane and broken levees, yet somehow the government was unable to immediately rise to the occasion.

Washington had also given ample warnings before Hurricane Katrina struck, in diary comment in the absence of any warning strikes terrorists buried fully-packed airplanes into the most lethal sets ever carried out in the United States in 2001.

"If this is what happens when the nation has two days of advance warning, imagine the effect of [a] surprise attack using a chemical, biological or nuclear device," said Hal Light of the nonpartisan Brookings Institution.

Ironically, he said, a Category 5 hurricane was already on the Department of Homeland Security's list of 15 planning scenarios for emergency response.

The term heightens state of the authorities' near-violence in nearly every other department, as Katrina wrought havoc in New Orleans, which bore the brunt of the hurricane in the US Gulf coast.

Up to 20,000 people who heeded warnings to evacuate to the Superdome stadium were made to spend days in sweltering squalor at the site of some of the most chaotic scenes.

Some of them were repeatedly raped and beaten. Outside the stadium, gunshots rang out, making rescue helicopters difficult to bring in supplies.

"We are out here like poor animals. We don't have help," Jesse Clark, a 48-year-old mechanic, said Thursday outside the New Orleans Convention Center, where rotting corpses lay in the open and where some complained that they had been dropped off and given nothing.

Lootings and carjackings occurred freely as armed gangs took the law into their own hands.

By the time troops arrived with shoot-to-kill orders, much of the damage—scenes usually seen in some Third World countries—was already done.

The victims, almost all black and poor and black, were called "refugees" in their own country.

"The ghastly spectacle of overwhelmingly black residents raged in an unsanitary sports stadium and left almost entirely to their own devices would not have eerie memories of the darkest days of segregation and overly racist Jim Crow laws in the American South," said The Independent newspaper in Britain.

The potential for racial conflict has been quietly acknowledged in much of the US media coverage to date, but it is also impossible to ignore, it was said.

"Indeed, the issue of race and poverty in New Orleans" was the banner headline Friday of The New York Post, a daily tabloid.

It had called the catastrophe "our tsunami," recalling the tsunami of 12/7,000 people in Indonesia and several other countries along the Indian Ocean coastline following a powerful earthquake last December.

"Unlike in a tsunami, it's terrible, it's unbelievable we generally are to other countries, in this Third World, and it is happening here in the US," said a veteran Portuguese commentator with US television network CNN.

"Unlike in a tsunami which I never thought I would see in a my life time it is here," he added. AFP

Black victims spark race debate

WASHINGTON—The horrifying television images of the ravages wrought by Hurricane Katrina have sparked a thorny race debate in the United States as it becomes clear that most of its victims are black.

The unstoppable fact that African Americans are the hardest hit by the biblical scale disaster has prompted conjecture of racist discrimination by the authorities in the widely criticized rescue operation.

"If white people hadn't been poor and black, they wouldn't have been left in New Orleans in the first place," said Louisiana Congressman William Jefferson, stressing that most of the victims were unable to get out because they did not have cars or cash to pay for hotels.

"In New Orleans, the poorest and most desperate people are black people, and there are no two ways around that. And, as consequence by the response time and all of the rest of it—I don't know if it has anything to do with the fact that people are black," Jefferson told BBMG television.

New Orleans is a city of around 1.4 million people, 67.3 percent of whom are black and 28 percent of whom live below the poverty line. Nationally, 12 percent of Americans are black and 12.7 percent of them live in poverty.

Bill Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, the most powerful black woman in the country, weighed in on the mounting debate, denying that discrimination had played any part in the handling of the catastrophe.

"I really do believe that people know that Americans don't want Americans to suffer," she told a press conference Friday.

"That Americans would somehow in a crisis allowed was decide who to help and who not to help—I just don't believe it. Americans are generous to each other," she said adding that emotions in the country were running high.

"It's hard to watch pictures of our American going through that. Yes, the African American community has obviously been very heavily affected. But people are doing what they can for Americans," she insisted.

Several black politicians have slammed the slow mobilization of the troubled efforts to rescue survivors, saying that blacks and the city's poorest areas bore the brunt of the flooding and ensuing horror. AFP

A MOTHER and her daughter, who survived Katrina, cry at the New Orleans Convention Center Sept. 2. REUTERS

World holds out hand to a US in crisis

PARIS—The world is holding out its hands in a superpower in crisis, offering hurricane disaster aid to the United States from a French offer of ships and aircraft to a $25,000 donation by tsunami-ravaged Sri Lanka.

Offers streamed in after the United States, the world's biggest single aid donor, said it would be open to assistance though it was not making an appeal for foreign aid.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has promised the United States "heartfelt" gratitude for the offers of aid that have poured in from around the world following Hurricane Katrina.

"We've turned down no offers," Kofi said in a news conference, when asked about rumors that Washington had refused help from Russia and France.

Scenes of chaos—explosions and fires erupting in New Orleans, looters on the rampage, bodies in the streets, and refugees crammed into a stinking squalor in the city's Superdome—prompted an outpouring of shock and sympathy.

"Whatever they ask for, it will be given, from reserves of oil ... to any other thing that they may need," European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana said in Stuttgart, Wales, during a meeting of the 25-nation bloc.

The world's industrialized countries agreed Friday to tap their strategic oil reserves and pour 60 million barrels into the market in a bumper response with dumping in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. AFP

NEIGHBORS being rescued by helicopter from the floodwaters of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, Louisiana Sept. 2. REUTERS

2004 DEEP Miss Germany 1992 Margit Mueller poses for photographers as 12 Miss Germany winners from 1933 to 2003 gathered Sept. 2 in Europa Park in Rust, to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Miss Germany competition. AFP

Russian UN envoy arrested over Iraq oil-for-food scam

NEW YORK—A Russian diplomat was arrested in his overnight 10th bed and charged with helping a UN procurement officer launder bribes from contractors and taking a share of the money, an indictment said on Friday.

Vladimir Kuznetsov, a Russian foreign affairs attaché and the elected chair of the UN General Assembly's budget advisory committee, was taken into custody by the FBI, Bronx and US officials said.

Kuznetsov later appeared in federal district court in Manhattan and a grand jury indicted him on.

The arrest was only the latest scandal plaguing the world body following allegations of corruption and mismanagement in the defunct $64 billion UN oil-for-food program for Iraq, and a related postponement of the UN's admission he had demanded illegal payments from would-be UN contractors.

Kuznetsov was charged with one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering, according to an indictment signed by US Attorney David Kelley.

Sergei Tregubov, a senior counselor in Moscow's UN Mission, said the mission had been told of the charges against Kuznetsov were connected to the UN humanitarian aid program for Iraq. But the indictment made no mention of this.

Kuznetsov was accused of working with a co-conspirator who was not identified but was described as a UN procurement officer who appears to match the description of Alexander Yakovlev, who pleaded guilty last month to money laundering and was said to be cooperating with federal investigators.

A UN-appointed commission investigating the oil-for-food program, headed by former US Federal Reserve Chair Paul Volcker, said Yakovlev pocketed more than $650,000 in illegal payments from firms seeking UN contracts and also collected a bribe from a company seeking an oil-for-food contract.

US Ambassador John Bolton thanked Secretary General Kofi Annan for promptly waiving Kuznetsov's diplomatic immunity on Thursday so the arrest could be made.

"This is now a serious law enforcement matter and we will have no further comment," Bolton said. Reuters

Putin promises accountability over Beslan

MOSCOW—Russian President Vladimir Putin vowed Friday that officials would be held accountable over the Beslan hostage massacre in his most fiery set of children among the 331 people killed in the tragedy one year ago.

Members of the Beslan Mothers Committee and afterwards that the talks were difficult, but provided them with hope that justice would be done.

In his televised remarks to eight Beslan representatives including four of the mothers who lost their children, Putin said: "There is no justification for officials who did not fulfill their duties."

"All the circumstances must be scrupulously investigated and the whole public truth aware of the results of the investigation," Putin said, adding: "We will do this."

The meeting occurred on the second of three days of events in Russia to mark the Beslan tragedy which erupted on Sept. 1, 2004, when gunmen seized a primary school in the southern Russian town of Beslan and took more than 1,200 people inside it hostage.

The crisis ended on Sept. 3 in a chaotic and horrific bloodbath following a gunbattle between hostage-takers demanding the withdrawal of troops from Chechnya and security forces that left 330 hostages, 11 servicemen and rescuers and 31 of the 32 gunmen dead.

The Beslan Mothers Committee has demanded that Putin, himself and other top officials be held to account for their whereabouts and performance during the three days crisis.

Committee head Ruslan Aushev on Friday said Putin "promised that we soon will see a real change in the situation, that the truth will be revealed and that the names of the guilty will be named."

However, she added that it was clear that Putin was not aware of many facts.

"Today was a special effort we had and what he promised had been given," she said. "There were some comments that were apparently new to the president or of which he was not fully aware." AFP

Iran has failed to suspend nuke fuel work—IAEA

VIENNA—Iran has continued with nuclear fuel work and so much questions remained about its program, the UN atomic agency said Friday in a report that could trigger UN Security Council sanctions over fears Tehran is developing nuclear weapons.

Since the International Atomic Energy Agency "is not yet in a position to clarify some important outstanding issues after two and a half years of intensive investigation and investigation, [such] full transparency is indispensable and overdue," the report said, according to a copy of the confidential document obtained by AFP.

The report confirmed that Iran has started talks with nuclear fuel work which the IAEA had called on it on Aug. 31 to halt, in order to save talks with the European Union on guaranteeing Tehran's atomic programs peaceful.

The IAEA 35-nation board of governors had also asked agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei to report by Sept. 3 on Iranian compliance, setting an effective deadline for Iran to halt the fuel work.

Iran claims its program is a peaceful effort to generate electricity for the United States says Tehran is using this to hide covert nuclear weapons work.

The IAEA said that as of last Tuesday "approximately 4,000 kilograms [four tons] in the form of UOC [uranium trifluoride ore] had been fed" to the starting point of uranium conversion, at a facility in Isfahan.

In addition, Iran had used previously processed ore to produce some 6.8 tons of uranium hexafluoride gas, the end product of conversion that is the feedstock for making enriched uranium, or "more than enough to make one nuclear bomb," former IAEA weapons inspector David Albright said.

But Iran has not embarked on uranium enrichment, which takes the gas made from conversion and spins it through tonnes of centrifuges to make the enriched uranium that can be fed for fission power reactors or also the explosive core of atom bombs, the report said. AFP

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Venus battles Serena

Sister act invades Open; Sharapova, Federer gain

NEW YORK—Venus Williams and her younger sister Serena both won their third-round matches Friday to set up the meeting everyone has been waiting to see since the draw came out 10 days ago. Everyone but the sisters, that is. If they have to play each other, they'd prefer a little bigger buildup.

SHARAPOVA: Brisk workout >>

SERENA (left) and Venus Williams would've preferred a later match-up.

UAAP awards . . .

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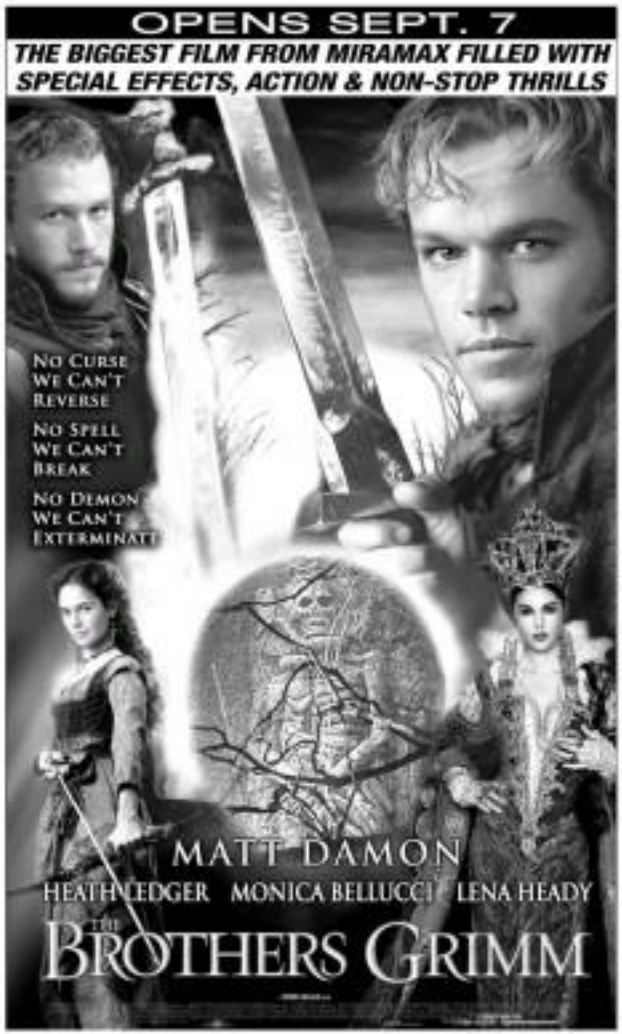

HUMAN BARBECUE
Sword swallower Dan Meyer endures fire swords during an attempt at a world record in Pennsylvania's Dept. 2.

US seeks Muslim help to improve image

PASSMORE... The top US official in charge of improving America's image abroad has sought assistance from the US Islamic community, despite growing criticism by American Muslims of some aspects of the war on terror.

But so far, Muslim leaders have not received a desired visit by President George W. Bush duty and would be helpful to promote the administration's line with the US government.

Instead, Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy Karen Hughes arrived Friday in Bonnieux, Illinois, where she met with top US Muslim leaders attending the 42nd annual convention of the Islamic Society of North American.

The society is an umbrella group for dozens of mosques and other Muslim associations in the United States and Canada. An estimated 40,000 people are attending the four-day convention.

"I found more allies to help me do my job," Hughes declared after the talks.

Close to Bush, she assumed her new State Department role last month, after the president asked her to help restore the US public image badly shaken in the aftermath of the March 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Solid majorities in key Muslim countries consider terrorism unjustified, according to an opinion poll made public in June by the Pew Global Attitudes Project, a nonpartisan research initiative.

The survey showed that only 21 percent of people in Jordan, 23 percent in each Turkey and Pakistan, and 36 percent in Indonesia hold a favorable view of the United States.

US Muslims are also increasingly wary of the USA Patriot Act that grants the federal government increased surveillance and search powers that are often used against them.

Hughes said the US government and Muslims, no matter where they lived, were keenly interested in fighting terrorism and violence committed in the name of a religion.

She made a keen appeal to US Muslims to help her in the effort to change negative attitudes toward the country abroad.

"Who better to do that than many of our American Muslim themselves who have friends and family and groups in countries across our vast [illegible]" she asked.

The Bush administration took heart in the fact that US-US Muslim organizations and mosques have sustained a fatwa, or religious ruling, issued by a group of North American scholars in late July that condemns all acts of terrorism and religious extremism as being un-Islamic in essence.

"The Muslim world and the entire world need to hear this," Hughes pointed out.

The country has also recently created an antiterrorism and anti-terrorism committee to combat violence around the world and plans to publish a pamphlet elaborating its position.

The Islamic country had sent an invitation to Bush, saying his visit would go a long way toward demonstrating that the United States respected the Muslim religion.

But the president, tied up with Hurricane relief efforts, has made no mention of any plan to attend.

The connection set up a Hurricane Katrina relief fund and urged Muslim Americans to assist the victims of the floods caused by the monster storm that hit Louisiana and Mississippi on Monday, possibly killing thousands and causing billions of dollars in damage. AFP

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US NMAT Schedule
Test Date: Chicago - October 28, 2006
Los Angeles – November 5, 2005
Contact Person: Mr. Geoffrey Vergara
P. O. Box 2532
Makati City, 0718
Mobile No. 918-6124460
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The Grail Message by Abd-ru-shin

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10th Philippine International Golf Show slated Oct. 7-9 at Megatrade Hall

THE LOCAL golf community is in for a big treat when equipment and apparel distributors stage the 10th edition of the Philippine International Golf Show on Oct. 7 to 9 at Hall 3 of the Megatrade Hall in SM Megamall.

Over 300 booths offering products and services and discounted merchandise will be featured in the show organized by the Golf Distributors Association of the Philippines, WGAP (Women Golfers Association of the Philippines), PGAP (Professional Golfers Association of the Philippines), Juegolf Foundation of the Philippines) and the PJA (Philippine Juniorgolf Association).

Call Pam & Shaw at 843-1321 or 7509680 for details.

Ring Tone rings bell for Esguerra stable

By Edwin Pillamuna, Contributor

RING Tone's message to the other imports was loud and clear. She's the new kid on the block but she means business.

The dark bay filly who'll turn 3 years old next month galloped solidly in the mud pertaining to win the MJCI Invitational in the four Lucero Lenzie Pick, indicating that she'll be a force to reckon with in major races ahead.

"She ran well in her last outing that's why I knew she's already ripe for the wire," said Jesse Cruz on the daughter of Bonnie and Glory out of Anapolis.

Showing vast improvement since she first joked a close second to stablemate Supersonic in the William Inglis-Australia Cup last week, Ring Tone showed through between Hermoge and American Pharaoh as the field neared the far turn and drew away effortlessly to nail down her very first win on local soil.

Ring Tone timed 1:26.5 (-20-24-25-27.5) and finished the 1,320-meter event five lengths clear of coupled her Sydney-bred, giving another 1-2 finish for owner/breeder Jose Esguerra, who bought the winner at the famed Inglis auction in Australia last year.

Hermoge wound up third, then came American Pharaoh and the Peter Cruz-

Global City hosts Supermoto race

KEEPING action-unbridled as Speedgear Sports Inc. and Honda Philippines stage the 2005 Honda 200R Supermoto Challenge today at Serfino Industrial Center, Tagaig.

Rep. Jack Enrile will be the guest of honor of the event patterned after the Supermoto races taken from its motocross origin and the Spectatorland from its European counterpart.

Speedgear Sports Inc. as organizer said the race promises sexy blends atop the series for the thousands of Honda 200R riders in the country.

The special registration fee is P50. Over P500,000 is at stake with P150,000 awarding the champion. Two of the top-winning team will go to the Golden Arrow Motorbikes, for details, contact Manola at 8920-523 to 97.

Touring Car set Sept. 10

By Marc Anthony Reyes

FAST cars, beautiful women and lots more action.

These are pretty much the stuff offered by the newly organized Philippine National Touring Car Championships which roars off this month with its race in Batangas and Subic.

Last year's touring car champ Lonie Ramirez, who drives a two-door hatchback, will launch the elite 21 cities held in the event which start off Sept. 10-11 at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Ramirez promised an exciting racing season this year with the revamped racing procedures, the introduction of weekly bakes to flag up race days and the re-designed Lobo International Raceways which will be the venue of six of the eight legs.

Ramirez's rival, Jody Cantemog, failed to sign up during Tuesday night's launch at the Work Out and Bistro in Rockwell.

Ramirez Hay TRC, Benoit/TWE AIP Turbo, SRO, V1 Race, Velocity, Tobia and Overdrive are a up for the season's top racing accolade.

'Fiba ban not forever'

SPECTATOR

Ad S. Hernandez

IF LITO Alvarez of Stella could lose his way to worry his fellow PBA governors to disband the training pool under coach Chot Reyes.

The papers said Lito would possibly be due in the PBA board meeting scheduled for tomorrow.

The papers likewise said Buddy Encarnado of the Lotto and Felipe Ysmael Jr. of Talk 'N Text would back up Lito's proposal.

Its not about to pass judgment.

You hear you wait in the papers, this said that last until it gains form and substance, it's all hearsay.

Lito's reason for the disbandment is the Fiba ban on Philippine participation in all Fiba-sanctioned tournaments, including the SEA Games in Manila in November. He said there was no use continuing the pool "if we are banned to compete play."

Lito has a point there. If we are preparing for nothing, why maintain a pool at all?

It'd be just a waste of money, time and energy.

But then, Chot has countered: "We want the pool because we are preparing for the future. The Fiba ban is not forever. Once it is lifted, the pools cannot be maintained with no more final qualifiers."

The papers said Chot's plan is to get us to the Beijing Olympics in 2008. He said the boys would be ready to go for it in the 2007 Olympic qualifying.

Chot's shooting for the moon, of course. The Olympics is more than SEA Games for us. The hardest to conquer.

But then, as we said, who knows?

Sports is known to produce the impossible, the improbable, the most miraculous feats.

While I too hope its Lito's proposal, I say let's not rush up things. Let's give the Fiba ban analyst's victory of the 20th before we even think of disbanding Chot's pool.

If the pool isn't worth spending for, then scrap it. Any project bereft of noble intentions ought to be nipped in the bud.

But is Chot's Olympic dream not worth our while?

It is, surely because we are a basketball country.

At just being in Beijing a like having reached the peak of the Everest.

At just being there is like saying the PBA remains on Asia's best league ever.

At just being there is like establishing basketball supremacy in the country.

What if we don't get there?

Hey, Ate. Not at least we tried.

Worse of the problem?

Years what I hear, San Miguel Corp. has been handpicking Chot's position in Cory Cruz.

And here what I hear, 7Eleven's Alvin Arap has been pretty satisfied thus far with Chot's boys.

Gee, Arap was thrilled of our decent finish in Las Vegas.

Yes, Arap was more than thrilled of our third-place finish in the famous Asian Cup.

There, Arap was ecstatic over our victory in Beyond last year's.

So, if the PBA's not spending anything whatsoever, why even think of disbanding the pool at all?

I say the PBA should even think proud of the Beaten Triumph and, to committee Boy, Angelo Jose Chot Reyes and his boys instead of peel them off the Pedestal.

I say to disband Chot's pool now would be a classic act of boss not to progress in the PBA. That is retrogression of the first degree.

"Bad'd be mas mejo badiumol, mas mejo ka... round.

***

Remember Alex Calingasan, the fastest No. 2 draft pick this year whose rookie departure for Atenco it triggered a stir last week?

Well, Charlie Tay Calingasan's erstwhile manager who negotiated the three-year contract with Ses, I mean Buddy Encarnado of the eventually went up in smoke following Calingasan's flight to Los Angeles, has finally broken his silence. Below is Charlie Tay's side of the matter.

"A lot of people have been asking me to speak out and point out. I guess it is best that we all let bygones be bygones and move on but the latest developments of the PBA and Philippine basketball, I might have been instigated but I am still put my head up high for I honor I did not do anything wrong. All my players can vouch for me for to my knows team agent, never had, not any of my players, encountered such problem. My only interest is to see my players have a good future and not to see their future. I believe all the teams can also attest that I'm not a football for randomized very well all the situations, having been a coach and a team manager myself. I hope this will put to rest this issue. Thank you very much."

"With that, I trap the curtain down on the Calingasan case.

Next case, please?

***

PASTORIAL Rev. V Belarde, that well-loved buddy of mine from the shipping and forwarding industry will be the happiest man tomorrow when the Bulls holds its anniversary golf tournament at Sta. Elena. As Phils president, Boss spent nights tossing out volunteers looks one can imagine to initiate a trouble-free tournament. Here's to you, Pilar!

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SPORTSWATCH

NCA stag derbies in Makati

THE METROPOLITAN Cookers Association holds its Mega Derby Circuit at the fully air-conditioned Makati Coliseum starting Sept. 3 until 11 with Gen. Tire Warrior, the Rocky Group and Gerlin Enterprises. The organization, composed of the elders with a most cockfighting, welcomes four congressmen as new members recently. The duo are making its 1st Mega Derby debut are Ronnie Puno, Garry "Boy" Trajeros, Iggy Arroyo, Butch Pichay, Jong Teves and Benny Libanan. Only single-entranced and handicap MCA, NCCA and SPSMA will be accepted in 2005CA stag derbies.

TURNOVER: Cousins Jun Noel (partly covered), Ai Solis and Vic Sandino, present to NBC president Matienzo" Tec" Padilla (striped shirt) the trophy won by the NBC-Marcet's Spring Selection for sweeping the Ilo Crown Prince Cup international invitational basketball championship recently in Thailand.

LGBA 7-Stag Derby starts Sept. 26

THE LUZON Gamecock Breeders Association, the biggest group of game fowl breeders in Luzon, will present the "LGBA 7-Stag Derby" series beginning on Sept. 26 at the fully air-conditioned Makati Coliseum. LGBA prexy Arnel Rose "Boy" Diaz announced that these LGBA stag derbies will be wrapped this year to determine the Breeder of the Year winner. The sponsors are Lakeview Drug Inc., Hotshot Supreme, Lucchese Poultry and Luzviminda Specialist. Tickets for 6 and Plasma Circle, 4-person Hacienda Stag seatings will be sold on Sept. 5-8 p.m. at the Sala Hotel. Drawing of tickets LGBA members will be held on the same day. For details call Ed Lorenzo at 8967888, 8914013 or 0920-285 1940.

CHEERING SQUAD: Members of host school St. Jude College cheering squad perform during the opening rites of the 11th College and Universities Sports Association (Cusa) Season recently at the Araneta Coliseum. Participating are St. Jude College, Central College of the Philippines, De Ocampo Memorial College, De La Salle Araneta University, San Pedro College, Technological University of the Philippines, Manuel L. Quezon University, Trinity College-QC, Mapua-Muralla College, World Citi College, PMI Colleges and Philippine College of Criminology.

STREETBALL

RP squads best rivals

By Jane Mansero

THE PHILIPPINES exploited its homecourt edge and familiarity with the rules as the country's Team A and Team B posted twin victories at the start of the 2005 Adidas Asian Streetball Finals yesterday at the Araneta Coliseum.

Reigo Gumabala and skipper Eduardo Tersoro starred for RP Team A as it blasted China, 12-6, while Jay-R Taguiam and Bonjie Hernaida proved instrumental during the Nationals' 11-9 victory over Korea.

"Our familiarity with the rules is the team's biggest asset," said RP Team A coach Tene Barua, whose players also see action for the San Beda Red Lions in the NCAA.

Barua's steady guard use of his four non-shooters nonetheless clubbed on the opposite side while shutting his men with tenacity and efficiency within the 24-minute assignment.

RP Team B was also aggressive on the floor as the 9001 Region College dribblers crushed Korea, 13-9. Before squeezing past Hong Kong, 11-7, in the other game.

Mitchell Hugo Abalos, from San Beda alas, Randy Rapsis and Jolmar Padilla put up a stingy defense on both games to shut down the domestic from the visiting teams.

With the Nationals posting identical 2-0 records, they need to win at least one in their next three assignments to assure themselves of a seat in the Finals.

Tournament format calls for a single-round elimination after which the top two teams advance to the championships. The other competing teams in the boys' division are Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, China and Korea.

JOHN Marcelo (inset) captures the overall runner-up trophy as he defended his position well while taking the spirit Colors in the championship round of the 2005 FordLynx Cup Rallycross Series.

On the girls' division, RP Team A was also impressive as it subdued Hong Kong, 22-9, and defeated RP Team B to tally a 2-0 card. In contrast, RP Team B has yet to register a victory in two outing after dropping a 8-13 decision against China.

Other games in the boys' division saw China slipping past Chinese Taipei, 12-8, and Hong Kong walloping Chinese Taipei, 15-1. China remains the team to beat in the dwarf side after beating RP Team B, Chinese Taipei, 16-11, and Hong Kong, 14-5, in succession.

Enrile lauds Filipino shoot champions

INTERNATIONAL Practical Shooting Confederation Regional Director for the Philippine Region Juan Ponce Enrile is yesterday congratulated the national team for taking two individual titles and topping their team title in the World Shoot IPSC held in Guayaquil, Ecuador, recently.

The team, headed by Jay Lejano, Danny Fernandez, Phillips Chua and Nelson Uygongco, was fielded by the Philippine Practical Shooting Association.

Lejano ruled the modified division, showing up more than 900 competitors from 36 countries, while Fernandez topped the senior category of the production division. The modified division national team kept the world shoot crown while the team composed of Lejano, third placer Nelson Uygongco, Lyndon Bunuan (fifth) and Joseph Ee (sixth).

"This year's world shoot campaign is an important milestone in the efforts of the PPSA to gain honors and recognition for the country in the international practical sport shooting arena," said Enrile.

Other Filipinos who figured prominently in their respective division were Stelo-Island Phillips Chua (who finished fourth in the modified division and Nelson Uygongco who emerged at the three-cell champion in the modified division.

The Philippine delegation was headed by PPSA president Jesmond Cabangbat and PPSA Board Members Ric Manglicmot and Tinito Lucero.

RP gymnasts shine

ELIZABETH Mesa Pico and Carmencita Francisco reached the semifinals of the related pairs and Jimmylyn Garcia landed in the top 16 of the individual youth event in the 10th International Aerobic Championship held at the Montalban Beach Marriott, California, recently. Congressmen' strong finishes netted Tourism Assistant Secretary Cynthia J. Carrion, also the vice president of the Gymnastics Association of the Philippines and technical chair of Sports Aerobics, who headed the delegation. The Filipinos, including Nina Pangilinan, who ran in the individual category, competed against teams from 30 countries led by the United States, Argentina, Brazil, Australia and Japan.

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A majority vote

LAWYER Ismael Khan took considerable pains last Thursday to describe the exact color of the Supreme Court's 13-6 decision on the expanded value-added tax. The much-anticipated ruling, which upheld the new law's constitutionality two months after the high court issued a temporary restraining order (TRO) blocking its implementation, could not be characterized as a unanimous decision, the high court's spokesman said.

EDITORIALS

"The court, by a majority vote, opted to dismiss all the five petitions and upheld the constitutionality of the law," Khan said in a news briefing.

He carefully noted that several justices wanted to strike down certain provisions of the law as unconstitutional, but in each of the disputed portions, there was never a majority of the high court voting against. "Eight votes are required to declare a particular section unconstitutional," Khan explained. Because of these objections, and despite what the final tally said, Khan said it was inappropriate to describe the ruling as a unanimous one. It was best to call it a majority vote.

This nuanced view may give some of the petitioners, which include the political opposition and an alliance of petroleum-distributors, some hope of a successful appeal. The TRO remains in effect until the Supreme Court rules with finality on any motion for reconsideration.

But that hope now rests on striking down portions of the new law, not the law itself. A 13-6 vote, regardless of how you describe it, is an almost insurmountable barrier; reversals on appeal happen mostly in closely divided cases.

Some of the organized groups emphatically against the expansion of the VAT have practically given up on the judicial process, by promising a return to the streets. In truth, this is where public attention will turn in next. A clear ally of the President's has already rallied on her to postpone the imposition of the expanded sales tax, precisely because the higher prices the new law will lead to may cause great public discontent.

It is incumbent on the administration, which prayed for the new law, to manage the public's expectations. Otherwise, the decision will go down as an answered prayer—in the sense used by the great Carmelite saint, Teresa of Avila. "There are more tears shed over answered prayers," she wrote, "than over unanswered ones."

A clear conscience

THE SUPREME Court also issued a related ruling last Thursday: It found ex-Finance secretary Cesar Purisima guilty of indirect contempt, and fined him P20,000. His crime? Well, as far as we can tell, it was casting aspersions on the integrity of the high court.

Purisima, a leader of the Hyatt 10 breakaway group of Cabinet-level officials, had been hailed before the Supreme Court to explain a statement the media attributed to him, which suggested that politics influenced the high court's decision to temporarily suspend the implementation of the expanded value-added tax law. In his defense, Purisima said he had been misquoted.

But the court would have none of it. "Purisima should know that these press releases placed the court into dishonor, disrespect and public contempt, diminished public confidence, generated distrust in the court and assailed the integrity of its members. The court already took a beating before Purisima made any disclaimer. The damage has been done, so to speak."

We do not think that was in fact the case; but even if it were, we think the ruling is still unfortunate. In effect, the high tribunal sought to repair the damage it thought it had sustained by wreaking more havoc. The ultimate object of its ruling is not Purisima, but the constitutional guarantee of free speech.

On many occasions, this newspaper has praised the judiciary often called the weakest branch of government in political theory, as in fact the strongest of the three. We cannot understand the Purisima ruling as the act of a branch of government confident of itself.

The great Justice George Malcolm said it best, and said it for all time: Public officials must not be "too thin-skinned," because servants sustained in public service "can always be assuaged by the balm of a clear conscience."

Some constitutional ambiguities

SEPARATE OPINION

Justice A. Cruz

THERE is now a debate on the proper procedure to be followed when Congress decides to directly propose any amendment or revision of the Constitution, which must be done under its Article XVII, Sec. 1, "upon the vote of three-fourths of all its members."

The House of Representatives feels that the phrase "all of its Members" refers to the totality of the 236 representatives and the 24 senators and that the votes required is based on the 260 members of Congress voting from both chambers. Under this interpretation, the House of Representatives can amend the requisite three-fourths vote of 195 to convene Congress into a constituent assembly even over the objections of the entire membership of the Senate.

The Senate has the opposite view. It believes that the three-fourths vote should be taken from the Senate and the House of Representatives, voting separately, which means that even if the latter chamber unanimously supports the measure, Congress will cannot act as a constituent assembly without the concurrence of at least 18 senators.

Fr. Joaquin Bernas notes in a recent column that the procedure followed in the lawmaking process, where either chamber may approve any ordinary bill subject to concurrence by the other chamber, like by does not say that the members must vote. The definition of terms, a day the vote required when Congress proposes a constitutional amendment or revision is "three-fourths of all its Members," and its approval shall be made not by the President of the Philippines but by the electorate in the ratification process.

The Commonwealth Constitution, which explored the unicameral-bicameral assembly with a bicameral Congress, carefully amended to original Art. III, Sec. 1 by providing that "the Congress in joint session assembled, by a vote of three-fourths of all the Members of the Senate and of the House of Representatives, voting separately, may propose amendments to this Constitution or call a convention for the purpose."

But the Constitutional Commission of 1986, while also establishing a bicameral Congress, called for a vote of three-fourths of all its Members without distinguishing between the Senate and the House of Representatives (committee help) thinking that a may have been influenced by the 1973 Constitution which provided in its Art. XVI, Sec. 1 (1) that "any amendment to, or revision of, this Constitution may be proposed by the National Assembly upon a vote of three-fourths of all its members, or by a constitutional convention."

Otherwise, they would have exercised the same caution displayed by the National Assembly in 1946 when it made the necessary change in Art. XV of the Commonwealth Constitution.

Interestingly, the new Art. XVIII also provides in its Sec. 2 that "the Congress may, by a vote of two-thirds of all its members, call a constitutional convention or, by majority vote of all its Members, submit to the electorate the question of calling such a convention." It is also for cause if the vote should be taken from the totality of the members of Congress without the intervention between the two houses.

There is another ambiguity in Art. VII, Sec. 19 where it provides that the President "shall also have the power to grant amnesty with the concurrence of a majority of all the Members of the Congress." This evidently was merely copied from the corresponding provisions in the Constitution of 1973 and also the Commonwealth Constitution, which this time also forgot that the Congress is vested by constitution with bicameral character.

Should the required vote come from each House voting separately or from both Houses amalgamated?

There is Sec. 16, Sec. 28(4) stating that "no law granting any tax exemption shall be passed without the concurrence of a majority of all the members of the Congress." Father Bernas' analogy would apply here because this involves the enactment of a law. But the grant of amnesty, the proposed to amend or revise the Constitution, the invitation to call a constitutional convention or to have this question to the people, are clearly not lawmaking and might suggest a different procedure.

Interestingly Art. VI, Sec. 23(2) candidly provides that "the Congress, by a vote of two-thirds of both Houses in joint session assembled, voting separately, shall have the sole power to declare the existence of a state of war." Under Art. VII, Sec. 18, Congress may revoke or extend the President's military powers by "majority vote of all its Members, voting jointly."

We have are other provisions in the Constitution that also ambiguously prescribe the vote requirement when Congress discharges nonlegislative functions, as when, to take one example, it resolves a tie in the presidential election (Art. VII, Sec. 4.

I hope Justice Bernas can invoke the exercise of the Constitutional Commission as a secondary or auxiliary aid in the interpretation of the ambiguous wording of its adhesive handiwork. Such court could support me "the letter that killeth but the spirit that vivifieth" and uphold the more reasonable position of the Senate.

Fighting truth decay

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

THE STORY is told about a patient who was writhing in pain, and so he asked his doctor's help. After some thought, the doctor said: "Sir, I'll give you two options. In response to which the patient cried out: "Sir, doctor, I want less pain, not more pain!"

* * *

In today's Gospel (Mt. 18, 15-20), Jesus urges us to practice fraternal correction, which is true both the object and the agent is an uncomfortable and even painful situation. The truth hurts, but telling the truth will hurt more. As with medicines, we must deal with a truth decay in a radical way. We do not just filling a tooth's hole. No matter how painful it may be, we have to go deeper into the tooth to remove the tooth decay and, if necessary, remove the tooth itself.

* * *

As in tooth decay, the very first requirement for the removal of truth decay is the opening of the mouth. Let the truth be told. Patience must in its presence. Jesus must be dismissed. If this process is stopped, then the truth will be hidden, but only for a while. Yes, truth can be stopped, but truth, like water, seeks its own level. The truth will surely come out in the end. And when it does, then you're not only dealing with ourselves, you're dealing with God who's being on the truth, or did I help him the truth?

* * *

Did you know the every abuse a mother who heard her 8-year-old saying: "2 + 2, sometimes which is 4." The next day, the mother confronted the teacher for teaching her child bad words. "Yes, sir, no. It's 2 + 2, the sum of which is 4," was the teacher's reply.

I don't know about you, but I feel like saying bad words whenever people begin to treat the truth as if it were merely a matter how game. How would a few suppose the truth and stop the truth from coming out? Do they sexually believe that they can just because they have the numbers? On the same token, do we just leave the truth under the rug for the sake of practicality, utility, or expediency?

* * *

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us: "If he refuse to listen even to the church, treat him like an ex-Jesus once to the church, that means him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector." In our present-day economy, political crisis which is affecting our nation, there are two admirable cases: some people are not listening loud enough to the church, or maybe the church is not speaking loud enough.

* * *

In today's Gospel, too, Jesus says that "if two of you agree on earth about anything for which you are to pray, it shall be granted to you by my Heavenly Father." Dear reader, when your two-way traffic prayerfully, please pray and agree with me, pray with me that the truth they must hear our prayers and help us solve the problems in our land. In particular, let us pray that the truth will come out, so that we can all move on. In Jesus' mighty name. Amen!

* * *

Let us ask Mama Mary especially on her birthday, Sept. 8, that we may lead us into peace and reconcile that will eventually bring about lasting peace and unity in our land. Let us turn to the Blessed Mother, regardless of faith, to engage in a day of intense prayer on Sept. 12 at the Carmelite Monastery of Quezon, let us all turn to God in prayer, and let us also listen to Him, for the intercession and

[illegible]

* * *

Upon some back from a retreat with the clergy of Evidences under the leadership of Msgr. Martin Pendico. In one of our meetings, Msgr. Art Aquino said something that struck me. He said, "With God, everything happens in His time. But with Mama Mary, everything happens in our time." He made us realize that Mama Mary looks for us. She encourages, she prods, she prays and whenever we are ready, not assured, she will be there for us.

* * *

Mayor Gabriel Navarro called me in order "Umandili Memorial" supervised CDs for distributing to schools in Bani, Bangalore so that the schoolchildren around can learn through the songs of the 12-year-old blind girl Nelsie Soriano. He said it was his birthday gift to Mama Mary. Mayor did so unfortunately watch, Bani is having love and ecology-friendly. Yes, we have good people around. It is possible to be good, and in the Philippines, now, very soon, victory will be for the good.

* * *

Two more to hope. 1) I as the Chicago "A Day of Healing with Jesus through Mama Mary" (8 a.m.-4 p.m.) with the Korean visionary, Julia Kim. Admission is free.

* * *

Sometime ago, my brother Mintong Cruz shared with me this thought: How do children ask their parents for material things, "Do we have?" Don't a lord? whenever they encounter something bad or wrong, or we, we, adults, must never stop raising this question. We, let us not stop asking questions. Let us not give way to the wicked.

* * *

A moment with the Lord:

Lord, help me to help my cruel decay, so many! how painful it would be for me to do so. Amen.

'The soldiers are watching'

RIVERLLE

Raimundo J. Bonoan

Queue of the week: "I never lose to cancer. Be taken care of the media and the bishops." This was the expected reply of the President to the question of 10 billion pesos, chief of Hacienda, chief of Bigcorp, was brought up as an example of people who should be replaced because of corruption, right or wrong, but they never using their agencies for the interests of the Aquino regime. This is why people grown to hate my success of the more memorable quotes from the Aquino presidency, much like "Sus, ano ibinibigay mo?" "What are we in power for?" Hmm... I must be playing golf with the wrong people.

* * *

Did you know that a number of Scientology and members in the armed forces are now taking up nursing during their off-hours? In the past, most officers availed of nursing into, in order to possibly accounting in preparation for the civilian. Now, nursing is becoming the choice for a possible second career after the military. I am reminded that recently some 1,491 out of 1,966 candidates passed the medical board examinations. How many of those were doctors will soon be embarking to nursing?

* * *

On the oil crisis—how anyone cares across the article of Patrick Gabuldo in the Aug. 29 issue of Newsweek? It is titled "How to Escape the Oil Trap." Gabuldo points out that last year the United States consumed 20.4 million barrels of oil a day and is demand rising. For replacement to run on by burning coal. Gabuldo writes: "Fracking, or 'fracturing,' involves pumping water, sand and chemicals into underground rock formations to release oil and gas." Fracking is the process of extracting shale oil. Fracking is the process of extracting shale oil. Fracking is the process of extracting shale oil.

TALK of the TOWN

Editor Jaime V. Bartolome Jr.

Giving up Gaza

AFTER 38 years of occupation, Israel began last month a unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, a territory it captured during the Six-Day War. The Israeli Army closed down 21 Jewish settlements in Gaza and four settlements in the West Bank, displacing some 9,300 residents, a number of whom had to be bodily removed by soldiers.

As part of the pullout, the Israeli Army destroyed all the structures in the settlements save for the greenhouses in Gaza.

Among those who voluntarily left Gaza were Filipino workers who tended the greenhouses, growing tomatoes, mangoes and other produce. The Filipinos were part of a group of Asians brought in after the Palestinian uprising in 2000.

The architect of the pullout is Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. It was Sharon who devised the plan to put up Jewish settlements in Gaza after Israel captured the territory in 1967.

Sharon said the pullout from Gaza was crucial to the Jewish state's survival. Defending the isolated settlements had been costly for Israel. The Jewish encampments in Gaza had been constantly under attack from Palestinians, who outnumber the settlers by more than a million.

Although Sharon is disengaging from Gaza, he is planning to expand Jewish control over the West Bank and is building a security wall along the territory—two moves that would undermine the dream of Palestinian statehood.

Reserving the peace process amid these developments is in the interest of the world community.

Communities evacuated by Jewish settlers

Pinoys also leave

NETANIM, Gaza Strip—Like the Jewish settlers who employ him, Filipino farm worker John Hernandez wants to stay in the occupied Gaza Strip—where the army says the first Hilton to touch sand he could back home.

But unlike the Israelis, Abanadale was packing up on Aug. 31 as the isolated enclave of Netzarim ahead of the evacuation of settlements, starting Aug. 17, under Israel's plan for "disengagement."

"I want to stay. We are happy to stay although we are sometimes afraid," said Abanadale, 28, from a small town in Luzon.

"The Arabs said maybe once here and we have to run to the shelter," he said, pointing to a large concrete bomb shelter near the shipping container where he and 15 other Filipinos. That and Nepali workers have lived, some for up to three years.

Many duties were brought in after the start of the Palestinian uprising in 2000, when Israeli closures ruled out the use of cheap labor living within walking distance.

Abanadale's group earned $1 dollarh ($20) a day each, almost four times what he could hope to earn in the Philippines, he said.

"They treat us like human beings, not as workers," he said of the settlers, who say the land is biblical birthright and have vowed to resist removal. Fighters also say the pullout would reward Palestinian attacks.

Anxiety have gripped a key role in the farming greenhouses that dot some of the 21 Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip, growing tomatoes, mangoes and other produce.

Their presence, especially in Netzarim, underscores the risks Asian workers will take to earn more money.

Tina Arnado, 35, said her wage helped support her 10-year-old daughter back home in Manila. Despite the impending evacuation, she and three Nepali women were still making young tomato plants in a sweltering greenhouse.

"I love the work, we have a plan to sleep, but we don't know what the new bosses will bring," she said.

Arnado said she might go to Tel Aviv to look for other work. Reuters

---

• **Land area of the Gaza Strip:** 360 sq km

• **Population:** Palestinians, 1.5 million; Jews, about 8,000 settlers. Before the pullout.

• **Historical background:** Gaza and the coastal enclave to its north, for most of the years between 1,250 BC and AD 1967, was the only Israelis Jews lived in and often ruled the land of Israel...shaded into invaders or Judean control.

In antiquity, Gaza was part of biblical Hurkos or Philistia—the territories of the Philistines, a non-Semitic "sea people" hailing from the Greek Isles who probably invaded and settled along the coast in the 12th century BC (more or less contemporaneous with the arrival in the Holy Land of the Hebrews from the east).

From their seats of Gaza, Ashkelon and Jaffa, the Philistines controlled the coastal plain from 1150 BC to 586 BC and, conveniently, challenged Jewish rule over the inland hill country. Philistia was conquered (along with Judea) by the Babylonians in 586 BC, and the Philistines were exiled and vanished from history.

In the second century AD, after having quashed a Jewish revolt, the Roman rulers renamed the land of Israel—to strike to its Judean...Palestina (a derivation of Philistia).

They thus gave the Arabs, who were to arrive on the scene five centuries later, the name they were to adopt.

• **Israel history of conflict:** the constituent Palestinian Arabs. Christians and Jews had lived in harmony in Palestine.

But then, in the late 1800s a group in Europe, known as "Zionists," decided to go to Palestine to create a Jewish homeland.

In fact, the immigration of Jews created no problems. However, as more and more Zionists immigrated into Palestine following the Holocaust, the indigenous Arab population became increasingly alarmed. Eventually, fighting erupted between the two groups.

In 1947, the United Nations decided to intervene. The UN set aside 55 percent of Palestine for a Jewish state—although the Jews were outnumbered only about 30 percent of the total population and owned less than 7 percent of the land.

By the end of the 1948 war, the Jewish state...having declared itself "Israel"...had conquered 78 percent of Palestine—far more than that proposed by the UN partition plan. As a result, three-quarters of a million Palestinians had been made refugees.

Within that were not incorporated into Israel became part of neighboring countries. Jordan took over the control of the West Bank and Egypt administered the Gaza Strip.

In 1967, Israel gained more land. Following the Six-Day War, Israel occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Palestinians were again forced to leave the area, and also occupied the Golan Heights, which was formerly Egypt, and the Golan Heights.

• **Sources Israel:** Because Jews believe that Gaza and the West Bank were God-given and that it was their inheritance to live there as part of Greater Israel. The term refers to the settlement of the state of Israel from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River.

• **Sources for pullout:** Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said that an Israeli pullout from Gaza was essential for the Jewish state's survival. His spokesperson, Raanan Gissin, said: "Historic exchanges accelerated exchanges with the Palestinians as part of future permanent arrangements, under which Arab Israeli Israelites would pass under the sovereignty of the latter, while Jewish settlements (in the West Bank) would be integrated into Israeli territory."

Sharon said, "The significance of the Disengagement Plan is not only the evacuation of the Gaza Strip...it is also an unusual effort to develop the Negev, the Galilee and greater Jerusalem. The Government of Israel, which I head, considers developing the Negev, the Galilee and greater Jerusalem a primary national mission—and views settlement as the No. 1 test for doing so."

• **Likud Party:** Sharon's Likud Party opposed the pullout. Likud members argued that the withdrawal would be a great reward for Israel because "the previous unrest wasn't working... I think in the long run two nations living side by side in peace is the ultimate solution for Israel's security." He added: "I think this will create an opportunity for democracy to emerge and democracies are peaceful."

• **Reaction of Islamic extremists:** Hamas and Islamic Jihad celebrated the pullout as the first of the many measures to come against Israel.

• **Compensation:** The approved compensation package sets aside just under $1 billion to pay settlers for their homes, land, businesses and overall losses. Each family will be paid according to a formula that weighs the size of their household, the square footage of their home, the length of time they lived in Gaza, their salaries and the area where they are moving, among other factors.

For instance, a family of four living in the Gush Katif settlement area for nine years in a house on a 1,500 square-foot plot would receive about $220,000, officials said.

The total cost of withdrawal is expected to be about $14 billion. When presented to parliament in November, the compensation bill was estimated at between $450 million and $650 million.

• **Intifada:** An Arabic word for "shaking off," it also means abrupt and waking up from sleep. Politically the word symbolizes the Palestinian uprising against Israel. The first intifada began on Dec. 8, 1987 when four Palestinian were spinning as a checkpoint in Gaza were rendered to death by an Israeli army transporter. The second intifada started on Sept. 28, 2000 when Israeli soldiers killed 4 people at the al-Aqsa Mosque.

More than 1000 people were killed in attacks carried out by Palestinians since late September 2000, in almost all of the cases, the attackers infiltrated from Palestinian areas in the West Bank.

• **Security fences:** As a result of the unceasing attacks, Israel decided to erect a physical barrier. The absence of such a barrier makes infiltration into Israeli communities a relatively easy task for Palestinian fighters. No attackers have infiltrated from the Gaza Strip into Israel in recent years because an electronic security fence already exists there.

• **Cost of the security fence:** The cost of the entire fence is approximately $1.3 million per mile and, when completed, is expected to have cost about $3 billion.

• **U.S. initiative:** The accords, officially called the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, were finalized in Oslo, Norway by Aug. 20, 1993. They were signed at a public ceremony in Washington D.C. on Sept. 13, 1993 with Mahmoud Abbas signing for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Shimon Peres signing for Israel. It was witnessed by President Clinton, plus for the United States and Andrei Kozyrev for Russia, in the presence of US President Bill Clinton, Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Arafat.

Under the accords, the West Bank and Gaza were to become a Palestinian state.

The Oslo Accords were a culmination of a series of secret and public negotiations, along particularly from the Madrid Conference of 1991 onwards, and were negotiated between the Israeli government and the PLO (acting as representatives of the Palestinian people). In 1993 as part of a peace process trying to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In 2000, Clinton sought to keep the Oslo peace process moving forward by convening a summit between Arafat and Barak to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This Camp David 2000 Summit ended in failure. The Al Aqsa Intifada that started in 2000 followed the collapse of the summit added to the crumbling of the credibility of the Oslo Accords, to the point that by 2003 the right wing in Israel, and Palestinian Islamic groups such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah condoned the second intifada. Israel refused to deal with Arafat, considered a terrorist by the government of Sharon.

In the ensuing month of 2000, 2001 and early 2003 saw an escalation of violence by Palestinian suicide bombers and the military re-occupation of the West Bank by Israeli Defense Forces that made before this date more unlikely.

Compiled by PEI Research

Sources: Palestinians are on the right side of history!" by Benny Morris, professor of history at Ben-Gurion University in Beersheba, Israel, International Herald Tribune, Aug 20, 2005; www.pmo.gov; wmin...mfa.gov; www.mfa.gov.il; en.wikipedia.org; www.mideastweb.org; www.washingtonpost.com; "Gaza's economy: much of it", Israel Information Center, November 2003; www.palestine-pna.gov; and www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Hopes for talks with Reds revived

HOPES that peace talks between the government and guerrillas who have been waging a Maoist rebellion for more than 20 years were revived after the two sides said yesterday they were open to restarting formal negotiations.

The statements came after the government removed security guarantees for guerrilla negotiators.

In a statement from exile in Utrecht, The Netherlands, Luis Jalandoni, chief negotiator for the Maoist umbrella organization National Democratic Front, welcomed the government's move to remove safeguards against arrest for 97 rebel negotiators and their staff.

In July, the NDF said it would wait for a new administration then continue talks with President Maria Pangal-Arroyo, who faces impeachment over vote-rigging charges.

The government responded by suspending the safety guarantees, giving the rebels 30 days notice in August.

"The prospects are brighter now...," said Jesus Dureza, Ms. Arroyo's chief adviser on the peace process.

Jalandoni said on Friday he received a letter from Dureza withdrawing the planned suspension—which would have gone into effect on the 31st today.

"In regards to venue, date, agenda and mutual acceptance of chief duration, related to resumption and as pursuit of goodwill, all these can be further discussed..." he said.

Norway which has brokered the talks since February 2004, invited rebel and government representatives [illegible] on Aug. 28-30 for consultations on resuming formal talks.

Talks that had been scheduled for August 2004 were postponed by the NDF when Washington refused to remove the underground Communist Party of the Philippines from its list of terror organizations, as well as its armed wing and the party's founder, Jose Ma. Sison, who is also its self-exile in The Netherlands.

The guerrillas pledged to end their campaign immediately if the government signs a proposed 10-point peace agreement, which they unveiled for the first time last Saturday.

The proposal includes forming "a clean-and-honest coalition government" but Dureza rejected the idea, saying the Constitution does not allow it.

Jalandoni said the NDF invested a lower form 2 from the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process indicating the group that the security guarantees were being removed.

"We urge the government to oppose foreign interference and call on the US and other foreign governments to refrain from acts that impede or impair the peace negotiations," said Jalandoni.

On Saturday, the government negotiating team flew to Oslo to meet with NDF representatives.

Norberto Gonzales, Ms Arroyo's national security adviser, said the government was insisting on a ceasefire as a condition for the talks to resume. Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Pia Arcellora Lucot Barroso and Michael F. Lerrigan and Ryan D. Rosario, PDI Mindanao Bureau with Inquirer wires

RISK TAKER
A boy rides in a swing attached to the back of a used cart full of firewood for sale for his boss that make Vigan City's famous tiles and bricks.

MNLF, gov't 1996 peace pact tagged a failure

COTABATO CITY—The peace agreement between the government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) failed to solve the rebellion in the Mindanao, Muslim leaders, including those from the MNLF, agreed.

Muslimin Sema, MNLF secretary general, described the agreement, which entered its ninth year on Friday, as a failure.

"The Filipino people, particularly the Bangsamoro people, should have been rejoicing right now. However, it was delayed by Congress. It was not properly implemented," Sema, also leader of this city, said.

Sema said the MNLF has already asked the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to review the peace pact.

The OIC was key to the signing of the agreement by the MNLF then led by Nur Misuari.

Ahmad Syed Limpia, chair of the Bangsamoro People Consultative Assembly, said a body should be formed to determine the extent of the agreement's implementation. Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Basilan ferry death toll rises to 2

[illegible] toll from last weekend's bomb explosion aboard a passenger ferry in Basilan has reached two, officials said yesterday.

Islanda Ortiza, 30, died from burns he received when a bomb exploded on the passenger ferry Dona Marilyn in the port of Lamitan, which sent both with Americans old sooner and formally opened recently by UN officials, Basilan provincial police commander Abdulmenduh Kamlondin said.

A 13-year-old boy died on Monday also from burns.

Kamlondin said nine people still remained on the critical list.

Security forces have largely blamed the terrorist group Abu Sayyaf for the blast which left 10 people injured—12 others initially.

Kamlondin said responses the investigation has been slow as many of the victims had not given statements.

"They are the only ones who can tell us what really happened," he said.

He would not say whether the Sayyaf encyclopedia hit the blast.

The three-hour, which security experts say has received support from Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network, is known to operate in Lamitan, a coastal Muslim-Christian town.

Founded in the early 1990s, the group has degenerated into a criminal gang, specializing in kidnappings for ransom and bomb attacks. AFP

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INQUIRER Mindanao

Protecting the lost volcano

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Davao City

IT COULD have been one perfect day to stay home and rest as the clouds masked the sun that Saturday morning, that the fine day failed to stop his Thanksgiving.

For Tiponglo, 34, resting the fate of a mourning after day was nothing compared to the pleasure of finding and conquering the world's so-called lost volcano, Mt. Tipolog in Barangay Tawan-Tawan in Kapalong District.

"These reasons alone are enough for me to give up one good day and sweat myself up"

While Mt. Apo constantly earned the interest of mountaineers and environmentalists, and the destroyer of mainstream climbers, Mt. Tipolog is relatively unheard of by many.

This has served the mountain best which was a lot older than the country's highest mountain, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. No litter can be found along the trails of the mountain, unlike the ones that were scattered along the narrow pathways of Mt. Apo.

It was just recently that experts found out that Mt. Tipolog is actually a volcano following geological analysis. Through the study, the experts were able to find the crater of the mountain. These developments were the reasons Mt. Tipolog is now called the lost volcano.

"These reasons alone are enough for me to give up one good day and sweat myself up. Besides, this is more than just climbing Mt. Tipolog... this is my way of preaching to a movement," Tiponglo said.

Tiponglo is a member of the group Kalumbay Innovations, Oneness in Resource Protecting and protecting the environment or Kaalam Movement, a loose coalition of mountaineers from the ranks of school-based and community-based mountaineering groups.

The band of Kaalam (communion or friend in Cebuano), is tightened by their common fight to protect and conserve environmentally critical areas of Davao City particularly rivers, watersheds and mountains.

They are in alliance with Pinaglitan sa Kabuhayan Coalition for Mother Earth or Pinaglitan (etc), also a coalition of concerned nongovernment organizations, people's organizations and individuals advocating the prevention of nature against all forms of human and industrial destruction.

Kaalam's ranks recently pulled their respective for the Tipolog Explore, an attempt of the group to arouse public attention on the importance of the mountain and its environment.

The trek up the volcano's peak was a perilous attempt but Kaalam members were determined to discover its remaining grandeur and make a difference by protecting it.

But any mountaineer judging the death-inviting slopes of the mountain would be reluctant by surveying colorful ensemble of forest life—an indication that the mountain, although heavily harassed by the greed of a few people in the past, is trying to revive itself.

The range of the mountain, which includes Mount Tanah, is still rich in biodiversity.

Tipolog Explore's concern is reinforced, among others, on the fact that the Davao City Water District (DCWD) has identified the Mt. Tipolog watershed as its future source of drinking water. Forming part of the headwaters of the Pangan and Tamugan Rivers is Mt. Tipolog.

A part of the Pangan River is already overflowing the runoff of chemically-dependent plantations.

Gilbert Langid, an Obo-Manobo residing at the foot of the mountain, said he saw the destruction of the mountain which was known for its lush forest.

The large trees which used to conceal the mountain were the reasons the Ismad (indigenous people) called it Apog or Tipolog (lush forest). But as logging operations heightened three decades ago, the trees vanished leaving the Ismad residents virtually with nothing but bald hills.

"Mitos na kapuyo kinahuhy apu makita sa taas (Not much life can be seen up there)," Langid said.

But the Kaalam Movement knows that any attempt to reminiscent Mt. Tipolog and defending it against any attempt to destroy it are worth all the effort.

Recently, the DCWD announced its effort to rehabilitate the Mt. Tipolog watershed, along with the Talomo watershed, hoping to recharge potential to supply water to the Gumas.

All efforts to protect the watersheds of Davao have also gained the support of Bayan Bodrigo. Bayan also issued an order to stop the expansion operations of banana and pineapple plantations of transnational and local agricultural corporations.

The city council, through the committee on Environment and Natural Resources, has proposed a resolution imposing a moratorium on the expansion by January next year "while the issue of deforestation is being resolved."

But the Kaalam and other environmental groups want the moratorium sooner than later.

"These companies can do a lot of things, like expand their plantations, in two weeks... how much more with four months?" said Khalid Walibasan, adviser of student group Youth Advocates for the Watershed (YAFO).

"Attacks against the environment must stop. Let us give mother nature a rest," Walibasan said.

SOME parts of Mt. Tipolog are still lush with thick forest. JEFFREY M. TUPAS

Last man alive who saw Yamashita surrender

From page A1

Antonio Dumon dong de renard), decided to go back to their village up in the hills to scrounge for food.

On their way home, the two spotted the meeting between Yamashita and his corps of generals with a group of American officers of lower rank.

"I saw them exchange salutes, with the American officer lowering his hand first," Pelagio recalled.

He said the legendary general wore what looked like an unwieldy (and hot) cowhide "Tokyo hood" (allusive more to military uniform).

He said the encounter took place in Sitio Longa, and that he and his companion were marching "200 or 300 meters" away from the scene.

Asked how he knew it was Yamashita, Pelagio said word of the Japanese surrender had spread earlier that day and so other groups of enemy officers could have walked out into the open that way.

Videotaped at last

Before the events leading up to last Friday's commemoration, nobody bothered to write down—or verify—Pelagio's account. It was simply passed on orally.

The municipal government finally realized the urgency to record today's last of Pelagio's personal encounters early last month, when he was asked to narrate what he could remember on videotape.

Also interviewed were two aging Hapon-turned-Filipinos (Filipinos who were fluent in Japanese).

Nilo Maranggan, the interviewer, in mid-interview cautioned to pause Mayor Alfred Tadiaman, said the video would be added to the town's documentary material on the role of Ifugao's Bagnen in WWII. Unfortunately, most of them had already died without being organized as one veterans committee to perform.

Pelagio was in his 20s during the war and fought with the paramilitary "home-guard" who also served as spies and scouts, try for guerrilla or regular army units, Maranggan said.

In the brusque interview, Pelagio said he only finished Grade 7 and was a public works laborer based in Baguio City when the war broke out. After Liberation, he worked with the Bureau Rivers and then retired to become a farmer.

In the video, Maranggan said, Pelagio scoffed some images from the "surrender" scene. But Pelagio also said the first to salute was the American captain. Yamashita returned the salute, but it was the American, being of lower rank, who was the first to extend his hand.

What was clear in both the interviews and the video documentary was that Pelagio was nowhere near the scene of the actual surrender proceedings—the former Lourdes building of the Kiangan Central Elementary School.

The building is now a shrine and IPMA museum.

"He was just an active (battle-ready)," Maranggan said, explaining how Pelagio got into position—despite the US-imposed curfew—as witness an event no Filipino was supposed to see.

He conceded, though, that there's nobody left alive to "contradict" Pelagio's story.

"But he keeps on repeating it to his neighbors," said Mayor Tadiaman in an interview.

During the commemoration program at the Kiangan School grounds, Gen. Richard Gordon said the Americans declared the area off limits to Filipinos on the day Yamashita arrived—to protect the Japanese general from the wrath of the natives.

But Maranggan had a more cynical view of why his people were left out.

"The Americans just probably wanted all the glory," he said.

Speaking at the first chair of the commission overseeing the 60th anniversary of WWII in the country, Gordon lamented the dearth of Filipino-written accounts of the Pacific War—compared to the voluminous chronicles and memoirs by US soldiers.

Pelagio, just being a registered war veteran, did not even bother to go to the town proper to watch the anniversary rites.

Instead, the Bagnens found him and his wife Carmen in their wooden house on stilts, overlooking a green and brown hued of terraced rice paddies which the Cordillera region is famous for.

Getting there that rainy mid-day required a 20-minute walk from the edge of the road in Sitio Bokig, Barangay Waguidan, up and down slippery footpaths and along the banks of irrigation canals which, Pelagio said, Japanese troops also used in Yamashita's last days.

Near the end of the interviews Pelagio delivered what might be the ultimate proof that he was there as history's eyewitness.

The sandy-toothless Ifugao elder stood at attention, bugging a two-answer character from this reporter and gave his own snappy "Yamashita" salute.

So sorry

In Baguio City on Saturday, Japanese Ambassador Ryuichiro Yamazaki expressed his country's "deep remorse and heartfelt regret" over the atrocities committed during the war.

In a speech he delivered on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of Yamashita's surrender, Yamazaki said, "Japan [has] resolved to face squarely the fact that its military aggression has caused unbearable adversities and suffering to the people of the Philippines and several other Asian countries such as China and Korea."

The end of World War II was marked by Yamashita's formal surrender at the mission house in Kiangan. Ambassador's Residence in Camp John Hay on Sept. 3, 1945.

While Yamazaki apologized for the war, copies of a 15-page statement go detailing the horrors of Yamashita's army being sold for P20 on the day's sidewalks.

Hero

Yamashita should be remembered in the Philippines as a Japanese hero, the statement said, exalting the general with showing a "gorgeous plan of defense" against American invasion by choosing the impregnable Cordillera mountains as his stronghold.

It drew some angry remarks from new veterans who attended the rites, questions from their current relatives and accolades from the surprised Japanese ambassador.

The Yamashita papers were written by Angel Cimbalistan, an Ifugao teacher, who said he plans to write a series of books on "the true Yamashita," exploding the myths about the "Tiger of Malaya," including his supposed homicidal manner.

Cimbalistan said he got most passions from Kiangan's Valk, who remember Yamashita with a fond public holiday every Sept. 3. Present dead Masagnal Aroyo attended Kiangan's "Victory Day" on Friday.

"In Kiangan, people still remember Yamashita. He was also a cause caused by the moving surgeon of unlimited soldiers," Cimbalistan said, who said the manuscripts in Ifugao for 95%.

"Kiangan has a town in Ifugao I started with a population of 12,000. After the war, the population was down to 600 people," he said. With reports from Vincent Cabreza, INR Northern Luzon Bureau

REPLICA OF the instrument of surrender signed by Yamashita 60 years ago at the official US ambassador's Residence inside Camp John Hay in Baguio City. Virginia Fraser, curator of the Historical Collections of the US Embassy in the Philippines, shows the document to the media.

WAS GIN wasn't but Pelagio, in his house on stilts overlooking terraced rice paddies, holds (or relicensed) his historic moment of the end of World War II in the Philippines.

BATCH 1981 member of the Philippine Military Academy, Lt. Greg Ramos, a rebel soldier in the 1989 coup attempt against President Cory Aquino in 1989, was well on his way to making it to captain when he pinned his uniform in become a man of the cloth.

TODAY, 14 years after he entered the seminary, Fr Ramos heads the parishes of Santa Krisa and Our Lady of the Pillar (entire La Pilar, He says his transformation continues to this day.

Soldier discovers God in battle, turns priest

From page A1

stand his "unshackled." Ramos told the lessons in an interview. "But later I realized that, like the Eucharist, we also have to be listener, blessed and shared with others."

A nominal Catholic in the past, Ramos actually answered his faith in the barracks, in the company of fellow battle-hardened soldiers from other faiths.

He believes he first heard God's voice calling after he made his first "kill" in 1984, just three months after his graduation from the PMA.

Resting in an unmowed vehicle behind his favorite 20-man formation, he laid the dream to Light Armor Company in patrolling communist New People's Army positions in Tagum, Davao del Norte.

Sleepless nights

At the end of the firefight, he learned that successors had found extra body parts and lots of blood behind enemy lines.

For three nights, deep shaded him.

One time, he learned that a classmate and an upperclassman had been ambushed and killed by a rebel hit squad. It got him thinking.

"Why are we killing?" he recalled asking himself. "These rebels are human beings, too. They have families as well. My fellow soldiers never blessed with education, but how come they were killed just like that?"

From then on, Ramos was convinced that Divine Providence was steering him toward something he could not find within the military.

In the final days of Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, he sent a rebel message of the Pinggot Hill and counties being reared in a sea of humanity along Edsa.

Side of the devil

"It stuck in my mind. If Marcos [Mary was on the side of the people, who was on the other side where soldiers were? It must be the devil," he said.

More questions furnished Ramos. Were the saints real dreams or Mary necessary? Did we need their images in our churches? Could we talk to God directly?

Soon, he found himself organizing monthly Masses for the entire Army brigade in Davao. Many times he debated with the Aglipay Christians in the area, but he didn't quite know his faith as he had to read the Bible.

"The transformation caught the eye of our Dominican priests, who told him: 'Perhaps you have a vocation. It's natural for a soldier to become a religious and priest.'"

Confronting God

One day in 1987, he asked God point-blank: Are you calling me?

He got his answer on the Feast of the Assumption.

Ramos volunteered to donate balloons for school children in Davao as organized by a group of sisters. He phoned in his order but never bothered to check afterward.

Pick-up time came and there were no balloons.

Told that the children were expecting them, Ramos was deeply bothered. "Because of my carelessness, I threatened the children."

The following day, at around 4 a.m., he and six of his soldiers descended from the mountains to look for balloons in the city. They found them—and they returned to the school that morning like heroes to the children.

One last fling

The incident made him realize that he should never take things for granted. It was the last of a series of events that convinced him it was time to become a priest.

The soldier looking for rebels in the mountains had found God, instead.

Two years later, in December 1989, when everybody in the brigade was expecting him to join the priesthood, Ramos pulled one last surprise.

He deployed his company to Davao City as a "sympathy move" with rebel Scout Rangers attempting to unseat Aquino in Manila. The mutiny was short-lived and he was soon convinced by his commander to return to barracks.

God's hand, again

Still, the dramas had been done and Ramos was sucked down his soul. He was later summoned in the 1990s by the commander looking into the Muslim coup against the Aquino regime. He emerged from his ordeal without being tortured.

Again, he saw God's hand in it.

Following his first Christmas on his way to being a captain when he entered the seminary in 1991.

"I thought it was going to be relatively easy because of my discipline in the PMA, but I was wrong," he said. "First, it was much more difficult. It was more of a processing, the need for psychological and spiritual toughness."

Only few are chosen

The difficulty is reflected in the fact that out of an average 55 applicants yearly, only eight are usually accepted in the six-year formation program, said Fr. Jose Alain Dialogo, a former school-brother and now rector of BASS.

Dialogo said the school enjoyed a higher batting average than regular seminaries in producing priests. An average of five out of 20 BASS seminarians are ordained priests.

But that, Dialogo credits the maturity, discipline and camaraderie which applicants had developed in their previous profession of service.

UNIT first partner, Bishop Mylo Hubert Vergara of San Jose, Nueva Ecija, was an engineering management graduate of Ateneo.

Internal struggle

At the seminary, Ramos hired. It back to hold his punches.

"Back in the PMA, we settled disputes through firefights," he said. "At UNIST, they were a totally different ball game. It was the first time I'd be locked out automatically."

A motivational, trained, focused on a much more important and difficult "internal struggle" that went with the priesthood.

"When God calls you and you respond to Him, you will be converted," he said. "But there is a difficulty in that. In the process of following Him, you undergo changes."

The challenge

Ramos said his considerations was continuing up to now, nine years after his ordination. He heads the parishes of Santa Krisa and Our Lady of the Pillar in La Pilar.

Ramos said the challenge for priests was "to go out there, be in touch with the people and guide the flock entrusted to him."

"After nine years, I still need to be broken and shared with others," he said.

'Jueteng' cash for bishops . . .

the beneficiaries of jueteng funds, according to some of the mayors who attended the pan-con-ference League of Municipalities of the Philippines (LMP) annual national in Puerto Princesa City.

"Ang problema, kapag nambaboy ang mild-gaon, city money talong, kapag munic city nanong nobo! (The problem is if the church loots, talo. It's called jail, but if a mayor benefits it's called a bribe)," said a local executive who was quoted in a conference news release.

The LMP delegates, however, did not say if they were referring to the Roman Catholic, Protestant or Iglesia ni Cristo church.

Summit Star and Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn did not comment on the mayors' disclosure.

Good news

Instead, he talked about the "good news." Close to 200 city and municipal mayors attending the summit had signed a covenant in the "Filipinos' eradication of jueteng" in their respective areas.

About 90 percent of the mayors who attended Hagedorn's proposal to revive the small Town Lottery or STL, which the administration once called the "best legal solution" for the illegal numbers game.

"A few mayors frowned the legalization of jueteng while the rest said the Bingo 2-Balls (which was introduced during the short-lived Estrada administration) should be brought back, "Hagedorn said.

Several LMP provincial chapter presidents, including Bataanan Mayor Ramon Guico Jr. (Pangasinan), who is also LMP national president, Lubao Mayor Dennis Pineda (Pampanga), son of suspected jueteng lord Nardello "Bong" Pineda, and Aklan Mayor Napoleon Bautista, a member of the influential Dy political clan in Cagayan Valley, had earlier affixed their signatures in the anti-jueteng manifesto.

Pangasinan, Batangas and Batanes are among the jueteng "hotspots" in Luzon, according to Hagedorn.

Other signatories

Other covenant signatories included the following LMP chapter heads: Mayor Constante Abad (Ilocos Norte), Mayor Jesus Suarez Jr (Ilocos Sur), Mayor Ambrosio Cruz (Bataan), Mayor Gilberto Acero (Laguna), Mayor Norberto Manabat (Cotabato), Mayor Salvador Calvo (Surigao), Mayor Raymundo del Rosario (Cavite), Mayor Jerry Trinidad (Quezon), Mayor Tomas Osorio (Marinduque) and Mayor Gerardo Calderon (Rizal).

They all pledged to "eradicate and put in a complete halt the operations of jueteng" in their respective areas of jurisdiction.

Hagedorn said his outlet got the same endorsement from Bacoa Star Gon Luis "Chavit" Singson and Batangas Gov. Armando Sanchez.

During the run-day conference in the Palawan capital, the mayors reported that jueteng "flu-less in 3/4 of 700 cities and municipalities in Luzon."

Livelihood

"Around one million individuals, including kalesador or bet collectors, reviewers, runners and other workers, depend on jueteng as their daily means of sustenance. Many of them have been employed as such since childhood," said the summit news release.

Jueteng personnel "promptly become unemployed as a result of the ban on the part of the operators and their capitalists, a source of barby 'ea-ra, incentive for those in government, a source of employment for the many who are unemployed, and for the lessees, the promise of big payoffs for their paltry bets," Hagedorn said.

Citing media reports, "gross jueteng collections in Regions I to 5, Cordillera Administrative Region and the National Capital Region (Metro Manila) amount to P76 million a day or P27 billion a year," he said.

65-35 sharing

"With the annual sharing of 65-35, this means that, annually, at least P9.86 billion goes to gambling lords and the so-called intelligence while P17.5 billion goes to the local bigshots or kapitahan (financiers), who pays the kabo-and bahrador (table manager and collector) and related payouts," Hagedorn said.

Provincial, city and municipal executives, who are not operators themselves, "depend on jueteng contributions to provide various forms of what they call 'walis-to-gyan' maintenance—from mothers going birth to pledge (donations) for wakes and other debuts. These contributions come from the approximately P9.46 billion a year share of the gambling lords, representing their 35 percent of the jueteng collections and also from the regular, "he said.

"Likewise, these contributions remain as a source of election campaign funds apart from the principles of utilizing the influence of lords and kabrador in campaign mobilization under the traditional practice of patronage politics," Hagedorn said.

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Opposition tagged in 'smear job' vs bishops

ADMINISTRATION lawmakers yesterday accused the opposition of spearheading a smear campaign against Catholic bishops for receiving money from the state-run Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

Manila Governing City Rep. Benjie Abalos and Bataan Rep. Enrique Edwards Dakila said the opposition's "unmerited black propaganda campaign" was ostensibly because the Pagcor donations to the Church were "a nonpartisan practice to support charitable projects that began several administrations ago."

They said the supposed smear campaign "would not be a pastoralmove" because the bishops had just openly call for Malacañang to "stop the gambling menace" and seek "revival" in their "status quotan participation in politics and by political leaders to achieve enlightenment." —Philip C. Tubeza

It's moral . . .

Transcription A2

"jueteng" and election fraud scandals. Instead, it called for the creation of a truth commission that backed the impeachment process.

"I wonder why Pagcor officials left to money then, and are now announcing to the Inquirer that we were getting money [from the agency]," he said.

Accepted money

"We did not ask for it," he added, referring to the ex-religious.

Adonis said he and the other bishops decided to take the money and spend it on it in charity projects.

"We accepted the money," he said, but did not disclose the amounts involved.

Vidal himself admitted being a "recipient" of donations from Pagcor, but said the funds were directly to various beneficiaries in Cebu, the tourism chief said through Msgr. Achilles Delmy, the Cebu archdiocese's media liaison officer.

Delmy said that as far as he could recall, the only personal gifts that Vidal had accepted from Pagcor were the four hockey sets to the archbishop's residence, which were among the many boat baskets received by the prelate during the holiday season.

According to Delmy, Vidal phoned him yesterday and instructed him to issue a statement, emphasizing that the money did not go directly to him or to the archdiocese.

Vidal is in Manila to attend a meeting with officials of Radio Veritas.

Delmy said the archdiocese was operating independently on funds representing its share of the income of the various parishes of Cebu.

"Cardinal Vidal said he was sure that of the checks that were sent or made payable to the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cebu," and nine were used by the archdiocese because these were brought to hospitals or schools that were the beneficiaries," Delmy said in Cebuano.

Before, not now

Archbishop Antonio Ledesma admitted that his archdiocese had accepted donations from Pagcor, especially after the 4th Philippine uprising.

But he said the practice was stopped in 2004, when the CBCP issued a policy against using proceeds from legal or illegal gambling for the Church's charity projects.

"We, we received money before, especially after the Obando events. This went to the seminary, not to the institutional church," Ledesma said in a statement relayed by a priest in a phone conversation involving reporters in the Office of Archbishop.

The suspension, considered the world's worst, in the 20th century, began in June 1991 and lasted until 1997.

Ledesma said the Church was forced to close Gawad sa Bangsang-ani and the archdiocese's outreach dioceses in Tacloc and Zamboanga built resettlement sites and initiated livelihood projects for some 15,000 displaced families.

"That is our way of helping the government can try out its responsibility to the poor," he said.

Pagcor was among the many donors tapped to help in the rehabilitation of the ravaged areas in Pampanga, Bramdoir Macapagal-Arroyo's home province.

After the CBCP statement in 2004, we resolved not to receive any funding from Pagcor for charity works for the poor," Ledesma said.

Gambling and morality

Capella said money generated by Pagcor was essentially "tainted" because its operations neither involved the poor nor promoted gambling among them.

"The vast majority of gamblers are not poor," he pointed out. "Gambling per se is not immoral or unjust, but it will be [so] if the two conditions—addiction and affecting the poor to lose their hard-earned money—are present."

In the case of Pagcor, which runs casinos, Capella argued that the money came from "legal gambling, where the poor do not play."

"Only the rich people are spending their money in gambling," he said, seemingly oblivious of movies about the rich and powerful losing their fortunes and lives to ruinous vices.

The priest also points, the archbishop claimed he had never requested or received a centavo from the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

The PCSO runs the nationwide lotto and the lucrative legal gambling that are primarily patronized by the poor.

Not beholden

Capella said "80 percent" of the requests he usually get for Pagcor donations seem to the hospitalization and treatment of the poorest residents of his archdiocese, one of the richest nationwide.

Asked if he felt beholden to Pagcor or Malacañang for the funds, he said: "No, definitely not.

"Our funds are not limited. I tell the head Pagcor have that we will not keep quiet on immoral actions."

Besides, there is no "direct connection" between Malacañang and Pagcor's cash donations to the Church, he said.

But last month, former Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman opened his Arroyo as earlier telling a group of Cabinet officials that she would not tank Pagcor chair Genaro, a close associate of her husband, because "he takes care of the media and the bishops."

Capella said the latest revelation on gambling money and the Church did not surprise him.

"I know someday it will come out like that," he said. "I was not afraid because we were not deterred by Pagcor. I really don't understand why this has become a problem or an issue."

He also said he received word messages yesterday from a number of bishops, all expressing support. "We are in solidarity with you, we understand."

Timing

Delmy questioned the timing of the report on the allegations against Vidal and the other bishops, saying the CBCP was now expected to come up with another statement addressing the Senate justice committee's junking of the impeachment complaints against Mr. Arroyo.

He surmised that Vidal was supposed to meet with other bishops yesterday to discuss the latest developments in the impeachment issue.

Delmy also said Vidal had wanted it stressed that Pagcor or PCSO checks issued in the archbishop's name were willingly accepted by the archdiocese only before the introduction of lotto.

After that, he said, Vidal instructed the parish priests and other Church agencies to desist from taking donations from the PCSO.

But unfortunately, he added, Church institutions in Cebu continued to accept such donations because they could not sustain operations on their own, such as the Asilo de la Milagrosa, a home for abandoned children and elderly; the Cardinal Rosales Hospital, a number of parish canteens, and the Perpetual Succor Hospital.

BICYCLE POWER
Members of biking group Critical Mass Ride start their drive from the Manila Ninoy Aquino Park to Pasay City in support of a plan to put up bike lanes in Metro Manila.

Police brace for rallies around Batasan complex

By Nancy C. Carvajal

ANTICIPATING massive demonstrations tomorrow in connection with the on-going impeachment proceedings at the House of Representatives, the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) will be activating "Batasan shield."

"Batasan Shield is meant to secure Metro Manila, the general public, media and government authority," said NCRPO Chief Vic del Rosario in his letter of instruction (LOI) to all concerned police units.

He added that it would be aimed at protecting the seat of government, critical infrastructure and key economic points in the metropolis.

In a copy of the LOI obtained by Inquirer, Chavez spoke of intensified anti-CMA operations with support from sectoral organizations and the United Opposition.

"Truth mass actions may become bigger and violent as they would become desperate [in trying to quiet] public sympathy," the NCRPO head said in his directive.

Expected to take effect today, the shield will be backed up by 1,000 policemen from eleven Manila and suburban and with the Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Representatives, the Armed Forces, local government units and the Traffic Enforcement Group.

Under the security plan, members of the police Civil Disturbance Management unit, supported by helicopters, will be deployed around the Batasan Complex.

"Their main concern will be to block protesters from coming from Don Mariano Marcos Avenue, Batasan-Litex, St. Peter's Church and those crossing over from San Mateo, Rizal.

Police from Quezon City have been tasked to monitor and "initiate appropriate action" against protesters from Northern Luzon arriving in buses and jeepneys and passing through Balintawak.

Lawmen are ordered to maximize if not prevent demonstrators from entering Metro Manila and going to the Batasan area.

In the LOI, Chavez ordered pre-emptive measures against demonstrators who might gather at traditional staging points like the Edsa Shrine at the corner of Ortigas Avenue.

He stressed that the no permit, no rally policy would be implemented.

Expecting unrest, Chavez ordered the formation of a team of investigators whose function will be to handle cases of unruly demonstrators.

Many that terrorists might take advantage of the situation, the LOI also put members of Special Weapons and Tactics teams, bomb disposal and K-9 units on alert, ready to respond to any threat.

The Traffic Enforcement Group has also been directed to provide monitoring assistance to ensure smooth traffic flow, particularly in places of imminent unrest.

To support the police, Chavez is also tapping so-called "force multipliers" by seeking assistance from Barangay Anti-Crime Councils, in close coordination with its local governments.

The NCRPO chief warned that terrorists and other groups might take advantage of the situation and launch terrorist activities.

He said the recent recovery of sacks of explosive substances and paraphernalia in Quezon City and Manila could indicate that the terrorist groups were planning big bombing operations to disrupt the elections.

"It is possible to maximize its impact to embarrass the present administration [before] the international community," Chavez said.

He noted that recent bombings in London, Bsulim, Cancun, Iraq and Islamabad could be preparations for attacks in Metro Manila.

Las Piñas also wants access to BF roads

By Jocelyn R. Uy

WHILE the United BF Homeowners Association Inc. (UBFHAI) and the Parañaque city government are locked in a dispute over the BF Homes main gates, south, or city has opened to the public the back side of the subdivision.

The Las Piñas City government opened Sept. 1 four gates within its jurisdiction—Naga, Southland, Estrella Cruz and Mariposa gates—on the strength of a 1991 ordinance.

Ordinance No. 152-91 directed the subdivision to allow the public the use of its streets and must roads to ease traffic along the Alabang-Zapote Road.

The alternative routes were called the city's "Friendship Routes."

In a letter to Cebu Rotary, president of the UBFHAI, the Las Piñas government instructed him to remove the barricades in various parts of the subdivision.

Traffic abstraction

The letter said the measures impeded traffic flow.

City engineer Rodolfo Bautista, who signed the letter, said the guardhouses should be removed within five days from receipt of the notice.

If the subdivision failed to comply with the order, the city government "shall be constrained to remove the same at our expense."

Reyes wrote Las Piñas Mayor Imelda Aguilar protesting the closure of the gates and the "unilateral" opening of the gates.

He pointed out to Ms. Aries, a copy of which was provided the Inquirer, that Las Piñas did not endorse the ordinance five years ago because of a court injunction.

But Las Piñas City Vice Mayor Luis Bustamante, who was then a councilor and a proponent of the city ordinance, refuted Reyes' claims.

Not included

"The injunction does not include Las Piñas City. The temporary restraining order was just for Parañaque City," said Bustamante in a phone interview yesterday.

"We are implementing the ordinance," he stressed.

He explained that the guard houses were ordered removed because they obstructed passage along the city's Friendship Routes that helped ease traffic in the area.

The local official said, by keeping the gates private, motorists, including those with emergencies, had to beg residents from the association to open the gates.

Las Piñas residents felt "trapped" not only by the fare hike also by traffic jams caused by the closed gates, said Bustamante.

"The UBFHAI is acting like it is superior to the government," he said.

Rally

Meanwhile, around 1,000 BF homeowners are scheduled to take to the streets today to express their indignation with Parañaque City's move to open the gates on Aguirre and El Grande avenues.

Dubbed Thanksgiving Rally, it would start at 9 a.m. at the Pavilion of the Child Jesus Parish Church and end with a Mass at the Clubhouse Pavilion.

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An endless battle against potholes

By Leila B. Salaverria

IT SEEMS a smooth ride will not be easy to have in Metro Manila.

Even though the Department of Public Works and Highways filled 15,000 square meters of potholes on national roads in Metro Manila last month, motorists...both natural and man-made...appear daily.

"Repairing potholes is an unending activity. We don't stop it," said DPWH-National Capital Region Director Rafael Lata.

Constant monitoring

According to him, the chiefs of the eight engineering districts in Metro Manila exercise to monitor roads within their jurisdiction for new potholes even after the DPWH reported on Aug. 26 that all of the potholes found previously had been filled in.

Lata said new potholes appeared on the newly repaired areas, but in other portions of the road.

"We may patch up one part of the road, but then new potholes would appear on another part," he said.

He said the appearance of new potholes could be brought about by natural causes like rainfall, flooding or earthquakes, or the activities of men like the passing of heavy or overloaded trucks, or excavation or the dragging of anchors by heavy materials along the roads.

Delays cost money

Lata said the DPWH could not repair new potholes right away. If it did, the potholes would get bigger and would cost more to repair, not to mention those make the commute uncomfortable for motorists.

"The frequency of our potholes repair activities...during and after rainfall. That is our philosophy," he added.

Where the appearance of potholes on one road becomes convenient and too many, the DPWH recommends the road for rehabilitation, the MOB director said.

The repair of potholes is part of the routine maintenance of roads.

The DPWH covers potholes with asphalt. Currently, it could not use cement because of the rainy season.

Taft rerouted for bar examinations

TRAFFIC is expected to swell today along Taft Avenue in Manila as hundreds converge to take the bar examinations at De La Salle University, three testing sites selected to take alternative routes.

The Manila Disaster Traffic Enforcement Office is telling drivers to avoid the traditional portions of Taft Avenue from Presidente Quirino to F. Ocampo Street (formerly Vito Cruz) as it will be closed to vehicular traffic from 4 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Traffic authorities say southbound vehicles may take Salvador Street to Arnaiz Extension/De Ocio, Manila, thereby also avoiding Kalaw, Agustin, who claimed Sarah had moved and Leo's refused to give him his salary, also seriously wounded the woman's husband. Willie, 37, and son, Jayson, 15. The suspect, convicted Cavan and her was arrested and detained at the Manila Police District Homicide Section. Tina S. Santos

No Fort demolition

CNCI Homes, the real estate business unit of CNI Company, has denied reports that it is conducting demolition activities in connection with the BTP housing project at Fort Bonifacio in Taguig City. Isidro Consuegra, CNCI Homes chair, said the company was not driving away residents from the property. The company was drafted that CNCI's agreement with the AFP and HUDCC he does only a 7-hectare property owned by TCT no. 128334 of the Registry of Deeds of Rizal.

Activities is to be developed by CNCI as an off-base housing development for AFP personnel.

New Palma prexy

QUEZON City Treasurer Victor R. Endaya has been elected president of the Philippine Association of Local Treasurers and Assessors (Palta). Endaya, the author of a number of books on local government taxation and revenue collection, vowed to adopt a uniform and efficient revenue collection strategy for all local government units. "I will serve a three-year term.

INQUIRER Platinum Code

What is the first name of the Pastor who is the author of "Dito Lagan," which makes our Balarilyan, and to what Order of correspondents of SEC-school Master and Watchdog?

Find the answer to the question in the highlighted letters above. Highlighted letters may be used more than once. Text in your answer in ENTER for SMART, Globe, and Sun Cellular subscribers and get a chance to win 5 free answers of Quick Answer!

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METRO
Editor Boots G. Dipasupil

A STATUE of national hero Jose Rizal with two children, who he has said are the hope of the nation, serves as a backdrop to a fountain and statue of a soldier at the Malabon-Korea park. INQUIRER

A small Korean corner beckons in Malabon

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THOSE who grew up in this 407-year-old town and have seen the beauty of the river that separates the towns of Malabon and Navotas wonder how it deteriorated into its current state.

But, despite the apparent neglect of the town, Malabon, now a city, remains one of the country's "gondolas," a major fish port providing livelihood, even seasonal wealth, to its residents.

Aside from the fish port, the city is also known for the pots, the delicacies that complement almost all Filipino meals, and the pansit Malabon, white noodles topped with bright orange shrimp sauce with bits of seafood, vegetables, chicharon flakes and oysters.

Desserts like sapin-sapin and suman (or balisalo) are also sources of pride for a town native of "Malabong."

Malabong, which means "plenty of bamboo clusters," was the original name of the city when it became a full-fledged town in 1670.

The bamboo could have been the refuge in the past of home-weary workers taking a break from the president's hands-and-hands.

Centuries later, a different kind of sanctuary on the river bank is available for those who work and do business in the poblacion and who want to rest their tired bodies and minds.

The small park is hardly noticeable from E. Jacinto Avenue, the street behind city hall.

Situated at the back of the city jail, the compact park overlooking the river is hidden from view by an amphitheater.

The park, with its lush peacock grass, flowering *panamela*, yellow bells and bougainvillea, is a welcome sight for eyes that have grown tired of the chaos of city living.

While running parallel to the river are lined with palms and other trees, and various plants.

"Workers can have to rest and take a nap," said Cielito Garcia, caretaker of the Friendship Park. She said the garden was even more beautiful before.

The garden has become a favorite venue for parties and celebrations among residents. It has gazebos with roofs of coconut leaves that serve both as view giving people a view of passing boats.

Garcia said people often come during the hot, dry months to enjoy the cool air from the river.

One of the gazebos, known as "koto," has bamboo and concrete stairs. Two stairs lead to the fall directly into a pond with small goldfish and adorned with rocks and flowery jars.

The other gazebo is in a corner of the park, a beautiful *mayapis* tree on one side and a huge, shady tree on the other side that completely covers the park's high wall. Moss-like covers its branches and vines reach down to the ground.

Between the trees are several bamboo clumps enhancing the feeling the park gives visitors of being in a secluded spot.

A bronze park lamp in the middle divides the garden into two.

Not even the noise of diesel of Plaza Rodrigues located on one side of the garden is able to diminish the charm of this new city attraction. If anything, it even enhances its quiet beauty.

Inaugurated in May 1997, the park had become a city landmark and a favorite destination for Korean tourists, Vice Mayor Arnold Vicencio said.

This is because on one side of the park is a marker that underscores the friendship between Malabon and Taejon, a city in South Korea.

Vicencio said the city's look had greatly changed over the years that the garden almost seemed out of place.

"I feel like I'm not in Malabon every time we hold our small group meetings there," Vicencio said.

The park, he said, was a nice surprise for visitors and residents alike who thought only of the city's floods even when it did last rain. Overcast of the high tides and smelly streets, particularly from Tonsuya up to the fish port area.

The park, Vicencio said, was constructed to help strengthen the ties between the peoples of Malabon and Taejon.

Despite its limited budget, the local government, Garcia said, tried to maintain the park, which was also used by government officials for meetings and other functions.

Residents who wanted to use the park as venue for events like wedding receptions, baptismal and birthday parties, were not charged any fees as long as they got a permit from the mayor's office, Garcia added.

The local government even provided tables and chairs for use during those occasions, she said.

Garcia added demand for use of the park was usually high in the months of December and March.

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Business/Finance Editor Margie Quiroga-Espino

Sunday BIZ

Exec shares secrets

JOSE de Jesus today

By Margie Quiroga-Espino

HE IS ONE of the few executives who left government service with no train on his tracks. Only the feelings of his enemies.

This despite the fact that Jose "Peng" de Jesus once headed the Department of Public Works and Highways, an agency that regularly ranks at the top of the list of most corrupt government agencies. De Jesus served under the administrations of Corazon C. Aquino.

De Jesus says he was probably able to keep his reputation intact because of his belief in transparency and a keen understanding of human behavior.

He now sits as president and CEO of the Lopez-owned Manila North Tollways Corp., the firm which rehabilitated and expanded the North Luzon Expressway.

Despite the fact that the announcement about the looming toll fee hike were made months before implementation, the increase was still met by adverse publicity and an uproar from motorists.

First Job

Stressful experience

De Jesus says: "That was the first time I drained the phone batteries of my cellular phone, answering questions, particularly from media, about the toll fee hike."

He admits it was the most stressful experience in his life. But it needed to be done.

The key, he says, especially with media, is to be transparent, and to be available for their questions. True enough, the uproar died after a few weeks and people are now traveling on the newly-remodeled road.

After building the road, De Jesus says MNTC now wants to position the North Luzon expressway as a catalyst for the development of Northern and Central Luzon, particularly as a tourist destination.

"We want to fulfill our role more pro-actively. Especially in creating and promoting tourist destinations," he says. "We have to let people know there are interesting things and designations, tourist attractions and products in the area."

The MNTC is coordinating with local governments in drafting a program to achieve this goal.

Career start

His stated his career as a student of human behavior, although it took an educator—a priest—for him to take the area more seriously.

He went to a Jesuit-run seminary in Pampanga. Realizing that priesthood was not his calling, he went to the Ateneo de Manila for college, finishing a degree in Economics.

Although a fresh graduate, he landed a job that dazzled even the hair of other new graduates and not so new ones.

He was hired by Cultex Philippines Inc. as secretary/personnel officer. De Jesus that he got to interview the pretty girls, and some of them were to occupy top posts in the public and private sectors.

Since he had a lot of free time on his hands after work, he decided to enroll in the evening, which used to have its campus along Padre Faura, near the Cultex office.

He took up a postgraduate course in social psychology, although he admits he was bored with many of the courses he was taking. Until he met and was taught by Fr. Jaime Bulatao, that is.

"He made Psychology so interesting and I started becoming serious with my studies," De Jesus says.

He stayed with Cultex three years then moved to Paluma. There from 1965 to 1973, he was vice president of the Private Development Corp. of the Philippines. While with PDCP, Peng pursued graduate studies in Human Development at the University of Chicago.

When then Education Secretary Onofre D. Corpuz established the Development Academy of the Philippines, he asked Fr. Bulatao to develop a training curriculum for government executives.

The priest recruited Peng to help in drafting this and in the next four years, from 1973 to 1977, he occupied various posts in DAP.

Training and education appeared to be the route he was taking, eventually becoming undersecretary at the Department of Education, Culture and Sports, from March 1986 to March 1987.

During Cory Aquino's presidency, he was made Secretary of General Services and eventually Cabinet Secretary.

Peng says he had never met Cory when he was asked to serve government. But he was undoubtedly a believer and a fan of hers. And still is to this day.

Once, not graft buster

He knew when he accepted the post at Investment Resources and Public Welfare Office and eventually the Department of Public Works and Highways, that it was going to be tough. But he says: "I went there not as a graft buster but that I was going to be a doer and implementer the projects."

He says he spent his 18 months not convicting corrupt Public Works employees, but implementing projects.

"I met with all the regional directors and told them I assume everybody here is honest. If I hear anyone doing bad behavior, I will go after him. They responded," he says.

He stayed at DPWH during the era of flyovers. He says then initially, there were too many flyovers on the drawing board and not enough money.

What he did was pool the funds to do at one, then commenced the others as the money became available.

"It helped that I had a president who trusted me and I also had good relations with the

CONTINUED

THE FORMER Public Works Secretary at work

He's the dreamer, she's the spark plug

By Yolanda Scerbo-Fuentes
PEOPLE Southern Luzon Bureau

SAN MARINO, Pangasinan—Benjamin and Ann Gloria Lolito are more than just a happy married couple. They are entrepreneurs, businessmen as well.

This partnership has produced three booming ventures: a chain of dressing plants, a cold storage and chiller, and an ice plant.

Benjamin is the president and chief executive officer while Gloria is the chief operations officer. But the roles are not really clear cut, they admitted.

"I say that we were business during the early years of their marriage in the 1980s when Benjamin, an electronics and communications engineer, decided to quit his job to set an electronics enterprise to try his hand at running a restaurant.

First ventures

The first venture was a franchise for Mister Donut in Singapore City. Soon, Mister, who was a "plain housewife," joined him in the business and they acquired franchises to operate several stores of Cindy's and of Mister Donut in Singapore and in downtown Manila and in San Fernando City in La Union.

They also put up their very own restaurant called Michelle's, after their eldest daughter.

The killer earthquake in 1990, however, hit the business sector in Pangasinan, and the Lolitos were not spared from the devastation. They persevered, and, as Benjamin slowly got back on its feet, as did the couple's entrepreneurial inclinations.

Another big challenge that the couple had to face was the outcry of the mafia in the provinces.

"To keep up with the changing spending practices of the consumers, we had to relocate to the malls. But the rentals were exorbitant that "we could hardly make profit," he said.

Big food corporations also started to enter the protected market sector, giving the local entrepreneurs a tough time.

In 1994, while still operating restaurants, the Lolitos decided to construct growing of broiler chickens for Vitarich Corp. They established a poultry farm in Mangaldan town. Two years later, they went into raising chicken breeders (parents of the ill-day broilers).

Then found with the chickens in demand, they established their very own dressing plant called LDP Farms was put up right at the boundary of San Miguel, Pangasinan, and Rosario, La Union, in September 1997.

The plant has been a consistent awardee in the cleanest and most modern poultry dressing plant (AA category) in the Ilocos region for several years now.

Pinoy Entrepreneur

Modern plant

An ultra-level raw dressing plant called LDP Farms was put up right at the boundary of San Miguel, Pangasinan, and Rosario, La Union, in September 1997.

The plant has been a consistent awardee in the cleanest and most modern poultry dressing plant (AA category) in the Ilocos region for several years now.

It was cited by the NMIC as having one of the best waste water treatment systems in the country.

But the partnership with Vitarich was severed after the company's business waned.

Hitting last year, LDP Farms has been servicing the needs of San Miguel Corp. which exports dressed and processed chicken to Japan.

The Lolitos also put up a cold storage and chiller facility, initially to service the dressing plant's requirements.

With a 400-ton capacity the cold storage was leased out to Bluck this past and now caters to companies doing business in Northern Luzon.

Most modern

It is the most modern in Northern Luzon and serves as a depot for companies in the area, Benjamin boasted.

The chiller, on the other hand, caters to farmers who need to keep supplies of vegetables like onions, carrots and potatoes, and of fish processors who need to store processed fish. It can accommodate 250,000 tons of onions and other perishable goods.

Successful as they are, the Lolitos remain humble, attributing all their success to God.

"We are just stewards of these things. Everything belongs to God," the couple said.

THE HUSBAND and wife-cum-business partners Benjamin and Maria Loling provide us with the "cold" assistance.

INSIDE the chicken processing plant.

Going loco over coconet

By Christina A. Gaylican

AGAME, SURIGAO: Jose Coco Tech, solagao Corp. (CocoTech) said it has already achieved an overwhelming feat in its products bank of discarded coconut husks have penetrated tough international markets.

From a small venture producing home-based coconut coir and agricultural products out of coconut husks, CocoTech now exports to China, Japan, South Korea, Europe and the United States after delivering to a growing number of local buyers in the Philippines, all over Luzon.

"When we first introduced the technology in 1998 as a project of the Naval University, no one wanted to invest in our project as it took the initiative," shared Coco Tech's chief executive officer Dr. Justino B. Arboleda in an interview.

Arboleda said that they developed the machine that breaks down the coconut husks to produce fiber ones and other products primarily designed to prevent soil erosion in deforested hill sides and riverbanks.

Taking a leave from his work as Dean of the college and with some P80,000 as initial capital, Arboleda teamed up with the Foundation for Sustainable Society Inc. (FSSI), a non-work, non-profit foundation that began operations in early 1990s to promote sustainable enterprises that are community-oriented, ecologically sound, and economically viable.

Arboleda said the company's no-employer more than 1,000 have been from the marginalized coconut farms living in Mead, Adlaw, Mission Grandstand, Southern Leyte, Surigao del Norte.

"Some 85 percent of our producers are women, who received additional livelihood as their families depend on copra and coconut farming," noted Arboleda.

Recently, CocoTech signed a memorandum of agreement (MoA) with Evangelista Brazen Enterprise Co. Ltd.

Under the MOA, CocoTech will supply coconut fiber pre-textile products which will be used in overhead repair in Guandong Pan Wan'i River Delta and other areas in China.

Some of the local projects undertaken by CocoTech include the social creation created at Tagaytay Highlands, slope protection at Cagayan de Oro City, the Mount Soal slope protection, Mailman river rehabilitation project at the Philippine Shell refinery, slope protection and drainage outfall works at Limasawa Barrio and the Bay River Rehabilitation Project funded by the World Bank, among others.

Arboleda said that to keep up with demand, a network of production facilities has been established in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

"CocoTech shall constantly seek out ways to enhance and improve the products and technologies in coco coir processing. Our Coconut coir processing equipment, a product of Filipino ingenuity, was developed and locally fabricated and innovated into high efficiency in coconut fiber processing. Our line of servicefacilities is a result of joint of research and testing of various crops throughout the country," he added.

World Challenge finalist

CocoTech has even made it as one of the 12 finalists in the World Challenge for its contest and pioneering entrepreneurial project in harnessing its resources product out of coconut husks and providing livelihood for poor families in the countryside.

The World Challenge is a joint project by the BBC World is Broadcast, in association with Royal Dutch Shell Group of Companies to recognize entrepreneurs whose projects are making a difference in communities.

Dr. Arboleda said that being one of the nominees in the World Challenge would be a big exposure to their small enterprise as it would be given a chance to be featured in an issue of the Broadcast Network BBC TV. (Visit via the Internet for Coconut log on to www.theworldchallenge.co.uk. Voting is solid until Oct. 16.)

The winning project receives a grant from Shell Foundation, that worth $250,000 to benefit their project.

COCOTECH is among the 12 finalists in the World Challenge competition by the BBC World and Newsweek.

A cruise of a lifetime

"YOU CAN dance the night away at the disco or retreat to world-class performances at one of their entertainment suites. They have lounges and shops, a library, a golf driving range, swimming pool, beauty salon, casino, karaoke, movie house, children's center, business center ... name it, they have it" said Felipe Ritter in an he described his experience onboard the SuperStar Virgo.

SuperStar Virgo is the pride of Star Cruises. It is brand new and custom-designed for the Asia-Pacific region.

It has more than 25 food and beverage outlets as well as entertainment and recreation centers.

Ritter, Asian Vision Cable marketing chief operations officer, joined the cruise as the world-class first sponsored some of the major activities of the cable company early this year.

From Singapore, Ritter and his wife, son and nephew were brought to Port Klang in Kuala Lumpur and boarded the SuperStar Virgo for a three-day, two-night cruise.

"The staff was very courteous and also, reasons in different national costumes would welcome you and take pictures. They would also give you a list of activities to choose from. They were so organized from the moment we were onboard up to the time we left the ship."

He said, "I was so glad that more than 60 percent of the crew are Filipinos."

At the time taken just to places where boating is an everyday affair, its chefs onboard prepare a wide variety of meals for guests to choose from.

"They have all kinds of food—continental, Chinese, Indian and Italian" Ritter said.

"The ship was so big that it can easily accommodate 2,000 people. You will also enjoy morning a lot of people from different countries. It was really a once-in-a-lifetime experience," said Ritter, who was really grateful for his free cruise.

AT THE deck of the ship near the elevators.

DR. JUSTO during his walk talking at DPWH anniversary with former President Corazon Aquino

Exec shares secrets

From page B1

Department of Finance which approves the funding and the Department of Budget and Management which releases the funds. "Whenever there were savings I would call DOF to allocate for the projects," he says.

Dr. Jesus admits to having an engineering background, thus he had to dedicate time to learn about the technical details of the project. But ultimately, what was needed was not just the technical know-how but the macro view of managing projects and knowing people who would implement them.

He says he spent a lot of time getting around the different projects and meeting some of the workers.

Several months after Coro's term ended and Fidel V. Ramos took over, Dr. Jesus moved on. He spent a year as chair of the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) and then spent the next seven as executive vice president of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

In 2000, Omar Lopez invited Ping to join MWSS.

He knew, what is in his late 60s, does not look his age. This is because exercise over 40 years ago, he committed to a physical regimen.

"When I was 30 years old I was sluggish having gained weight during my studies in the United States," he relates.

"One afternoon I went in a weighing machine and I gained 10 kilos. I was CPA. I'm like 5'8 lbs. model, who was well into his 70s at this."

And then he read in this San Diego Times about Bataan's physical regimen which included walking 60 kilometers, three times a week. He regularly goes to the gym and plays an occasional game of golf.

Ping married a former collegemate in College, has three daughters and four grandchildren.

DR. JESUS with colleagues at PUP.

Wedding expo set

TAGUIG and Manila: The Special Events Co. will hold the 7th edition of Wedding Expo Philippines on Sept. 9 and 10 at the SM Tent, SM Southmall, Alabang.

WEP brings together suppliers of wedding-related products and services, including caterers, fashion designers, florists and event stylists. They will showcase their talent and newest designs to entice soon-to-weds' attention.

For free admission by pre-registering at www.sbcmanila.com.ph or call Theresa de Medici at 811-8700 or 813-2022, for more information.

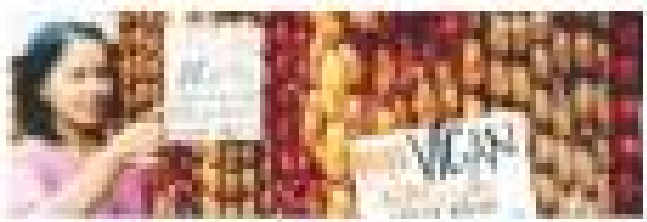
BUTTERFLY souvenirs

Cold cash in cool city

BIGAS-AN OR BAG. At the rice section of the Baguio City Market, vendors also sell colorful bags to the local tourists, who can carry their newly purchased wagang clothes and vegetables in style. Bag prices range from P20 to P 150.

NI KA. Salonga tea leaves selling vendor Jovelyn Ar-Arcadio at the cut-rate section of Baguio City market. Each brown sells for P15, although prices could go as high as P40

BOM BOW YOUR BOATS. Early morning each day in Baguio City, owners Boy Bawa two men prepare their rowa boats to rent out to tourists and lovers for under P150 per hour. Color Shots, more of 11 boat fleets at Burnham Lake in Baguio City said he earns as much as P 1,000 for a 16-hour operation even during the rainy season.



MONEY. Ansilya at Ansilya sells homegrown beggonia for P1 50 to P 80 per kilo depending on whether they are de-icicle (with garlic) or de-harmon (unseasoned). She said Baguio City Market beggonia can earn her P15,000 more during busy months.

Cecile de la Cruz, the vice mayor's chef, worked as a waiter for one of the city's prestigious restaurants, and now runs a seasonal eatery in Session the year claimed his employers' use of their tenure customers. He said the entry visits of Baguio business appeared to herald its economy's collapse.

The pessimism upstaged what has already been a trend. Between 1998 and 2000, the Department of Tourism has noted a steady 13 percent drop in Baguio's annual tourist arrivals, decreasing the city's overall contribution to the national tourism economy, said Purificacion Molonia, director of the DOT in Cordillera.

Out-of-town customers have always valued the value of Baguio staples such as salad vegetables, strawberry jams, and the ever-in-the-know wood carvings.

But when the mall's culinary management and marketing executives began conducting their own environmental survey to determine the future of their new mall, they saw that things in Baguio have started to work around, said Dawn Wilfred Sampang, a Cecile consultancy manager.

Many restaurants, which sell Baguio-themed cuisine such as pinikpikan (Cordillera broth using native grilled chicken), have retained their domestic customers despite the tourist loss.

The ubiquitous market vendor still depicts the greatest challenges, the brightest success, and the biggest pressures in the country and managers in those vegetables for the less than three sold in Metro Manila.

Northern Lake is still filled with boats that one can rent for P130 an hour. People still rock on Wright Park as they can saddle up and ride Baguio's ponies through down pine forests.

"I am willing to come and invest P1 million today in a Baguio restaurant because of the city's upbeat economy." Dr. la Cruz said.

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FLOWERS IN BLOOM: Even when the rains pour, flower shops in Baguio City remain in business. According to Ed Guevara (left) of Amman Orchids and Anthuriums, "flowers are food for the soul."

Sunday Biz

Cold cash in cool city

Despite dense business climate, Baguio traders still bullish

By Vincent Cabreza
Photos by RY Bayotlos

GOT Goods is a stimulation restaurant that tries to imbibe the best of what Baguio City has to offer, but the hotel and management students of Pines City Colleges have to first

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2005
Sunday LIFESTYLE

- Surprises
- Weddings
- Home

Editor Chels Bunal Formoso

THE MAKING OF A BENCH BILLBOARD

Under the Grecian sun

BENCHED. Kris Aquino makes time to send text updates over to the world of the awaiting Parthenon.

PROVOCATIVE. Kris and her team up the beach in Greece.

Text and photos by Bete Formoso

"ANG SAKIT!" exclaimed a gleeful Kris Aquino.

"You're too happy, Kris. Your walk is too big. Don't be too happy!" hurled Jojo de Leon from behind the camera, which was usually reserved of the country's top photographer and the official lensman of the Bench Body-Kris Aquino ad campaign.

But could anyone blame Kris? After all, she was being surrounded — some would say bullied — mostly by three disarmingly gorgeous European male models in the pristine blue waters of Paradise Beach. This was on the isle of Mykonos in none other than Greece!

Famous match-up

To jet another brilliant and daring stroke of advertising genius, Bench teamed up with Resorts — yes, those star-studded cruise voyages and trips to faraway destinations like Australia, Egypt and, your Greece — to bring their most popular Bench Body endorser to the land of gods and goddesses.

Fantastic!, spearheaded of course by Jojo Pernal, embarked on a week-long jaunting to Athens and Mykonos, an island off the coast of the capital. Aside from the photo shoot, on the agenda were exploring the Acropolis, hiring the Athenian nightlife, combathing on Paradise beach, and of course, wining and dining as the Greeks do.

Upon arrival in Greece, Bench screened dozens of European models to find the perfect Adonis worthy of donning Bench Body wear and appearing on a billboard with Kris. Those who made the cut were Ivo Zachos, a tall swapping Slovakian who clicks with Otoy Bernos, and Wentzislaus Tadet of Germany a dead ringer for Sam Phillippe.

A late addition to the team was Jacob Stoddenwood, a half-Greek, half-Thai whose physique and handsome face so stood out while strolling along the boardwalk in Mykonos there was no doubt he would be a natural underwear model.

Bench also tapped a pretty Jacob blonde, 20-year-old Mekendra, to model the latest garments from Kashieva and Greyhound alongside the Philippines' own Stockers Bell, Inward Ball Bench.

Perfect backdrop

Shooting took place in Mykonos, a picturesque Mediterranean island town. Windmills turning in the distance, white stone houses, and clear blue sea made for the perfect backdrop.

While the setting was relaxing, the photo shoot was anything but. Finished pictures never give away an inkling of how much work goes into production, especially in a different country.

Obstacles always popped up — from hell of persons for shooting to luggage left behind in hotels. The actual shooting also proved difficult. Di Leon had envisioned Kris splashed on the steps of a Greek Orthodox Church, cuddling on a balcony, and rising from the sea like a siren...all while burning sweep winds, blinding sun, unforgiving heat, and the constant gawking of tourists and locals. Not to mention endless wardrobe changes.

(CONTINUED ON 2)

KRIS with her wedding crown Ben Cruz

CRUISE. Adonises shoot at Paradise Beach.

Under the Grecian sun

THE TEAM braved wind, sun, and endless pacifying from tourists at the Mykonos photo shoot.

From page C1

and hair and makeup wrangles.

But all the ordeals and drama were forgiven and forgotten as soon as De Leon called out, "I got a good shot here!"

He was being modest, of course! De Leon's photos are never just good. His fresh shots have metamorphosed into the Bench billboards dotting the metro. Gigantic provocative images of Kris Aquino are up along the Guadalupe, Edsa and South Super highways. One more face/billboard is being put up on Avenue in Pasay, Manila, another is in the Magallanes area, and still another is up in the Iloilo City.

New heights

De Leon, who had photographed Kris for her sexy first product endorsement (Lux Bench), had only praises for his model's professionalism during shooting. Plus, "there's a natural glow about her these days," he noted, "especially when James (Yap, the pro basketball player rumored to have secretly married her) is around."

The Bench Body ad campaign seemed to new heights when it first capped Kris's comeback as one of sleek, stylish mannequins at the end of 2004. That her billboards visited eyebrows and elicited a few gasps is an understatement. In fact, even before she signed on, rumors of her possible appearance on the runway of Bench's scandalous underwear fashion show last year drew in crowds. The audience waited with baited breath up until the finale when there was still no sign of Kris, much to the disappointment of her fans.

Fun or not, one cannot help being drawn to Kris Aquino. Even foreigners can't seem to get enough of her, from Asia to the Middle East and, yes, all the way to Europe. While initially she is recognized abroad because of her famous surname, thanks to her mother, former President Corazon Aquino (an image model in her own right except her cause was People Power), Kris' star affairs (just see extended-arm snowboarding enough to put her on the map, first Singaporean would inquire after Kris, since her split up with Joey Marquez made page one of their local newspaper. Who doesn't know Kris Aquino?

And who doesn't know Bench? With stores all over the Philippines, as well as China, Guam, the Middle East and now the United States, Bench's growth is remarkable and unstoppable. The company sets the bar not only in fashion but also in watching out to all sizes and people through an creative marketing and advertising strategies. Bench always has the public stand up inner and looking out for "what's next?" Just like Kris Aquino.

Flying to Greece? Call (toll for Manila office (632) 8378888; Cebu (6332) 2337505; for Manila (632) 8176888; for Cebu (6332) 2337309 and Mideast Tours, c/o Lignos Tabinas (8938 832 2177

JACOB says this was his first time to model. We think not.

IT'S photographer Jun de Leon's turn to pose for the camera.

BEHIND IT, Jun de Leon's trusty assistant

DROP a rabbit in a glass of water and watch it.

Why Famous voyagers were at their best

WOW did are photographers Jun de Leon stay sharp and alert through the long photo sessions during the Famous Voyage 9 to Greece? The secret is Berocca.

A food supplement with a unique high dose of B vitamins, Vitamin C and other essential nutrients that are clinically proven to help you stay sharp and alert, Berocca is free from caffeine and artificial stimulants, thus providing a healthy way to sustain optimal performance.

It comes in convenient effervescent tablets that dissolve in water to make a sparkling orange-flavored drink. Its unique form allows the body to quickly absorb its vitamins and minerals.

Pinay model Nicolene Bell held her own against international models Alexandra Ivan Dimanch, Ivo Zarban from Greece, Maximilian Eisler from Germany, and Judi Thai, Judi Greek hottie Jacob Sondenwood. Even make up artist Brando Fuentes stayed cool, hipster after layout, watch for more.

BTW magic! Best Class and actress Miguel Fuentes of Bench is so beautiful from the sparkling orange-flavored drink, as they tirelessly supervised the shoots for the next Bench campaign. Cosmo editor Jemma Pita and Lica Ilinda of Mega also had their dance of shoots, which went by like a breeze.

Other Berocca drinkers on the famous voyage were fashion designer Raja Laurel, master designer and Pinasarap co-owner Aaron Barrera, and famous CEO (as in chief executive enabler) Irwin Pascual.

With its unique combination of essential nutrients, Berocca is designed to support mental performance for busy people who have to manage a stressful life and want to perform at their best.

LIFESTYLE

FR. ADERICO "Jerry" Orbos, Julia Kim and others participate in one of the first small healing Masses held in the country.

Fr. Orbos and Korean visionary Julia Kim team up for a day of prayer, reconciliation and mercy

WELL-KNOWN Congressman and visionary Fr. Orbos, one of the main proponents of the Day of Healing

Miracles expected on Day of Healing

By Jasper Briones
Contributor

LET US open our hearts to healing and to God!

This is the call of Fr. Aderico "Jerry" Orbos, SVD in the run-up to the "Day of Healing" Mass on Sept. 11 at Our Office in Pasig City.

Fr. Orbos, a member of the bounty of the Divine Word and a well-known author and columnist, spoke volumes about the significance of healing as a way to walk hand-in-hand with God.

"We all need healing, especially at this time when our country is beset by countless problems," he said. "And this healing must first occur within our hearts because the heart is the seat of our values, our decisions and consequently our actions. As long as the heart is not healed, we will see people who are selfish, unjust and corrupt. But once the heart is healed, from it will flow goodness, peace, reconciliation and love."

The religious event will focus on physical, spiritual and national healing. It will highlight the healing power of Our Eucharist through the powerful intercession of the Blessed Mother. There will be healing talks and seminars and a special Mass to be celebrated by Fr. Orbos himself.

The whole Jesus Peregrinans and the Day of Healing team in countless PIL prayer to return to the basics.

"We need to ask ourselves where are our values? And we all have to, somehow, choose to go back to the truth and righteousness, to affirm the message that goodness pays and virtue does not. We have to go back to the Lord and say we have disobeyed you and we want your help so we can go right again in our lives," Fr. Orbos said.

True healing

The missionary said that true healing takes place only after forgiveness and reconciliation. He observed that the nation is torn by political divisions and economic problems, which have left many feeling an oppressive sense of hopelessness.

"We have a people that are basically good," Orbos said. "We are also rich in material and human resources. Right now we are quite traumatized people and a mismanaged nation. We are also not very fortunate with leaders. There is too much politicking going on and it is tearing us apart. That is why in this Day of Healing, we hope to heal not only physical and emotional ailments, but also the healing of our nation and its leaders."

Fr. Orbos said that true healing begins with reconciliation with self, others and God. He noted that one must first be able to forgive oneself for mistakes in the past while striving hard to rectify them. He stressed the need for people to forgive one another and reconcile their differences in order to move forward. And finally, one must recognize a greater power that can surrender and help the country and its people through these difficult times.

"We need to recognize the healing power of God in our lives," Fr. Orbos said. "We need him to show us what is happening around us and that there is a bigger picture, a bigger agenda, a bigger mission than our own petty agendas. Trust in order for us to be healed, we need to reconcile with God, through prayer. And in our quest to reach out to Jesus, we also receive the loving grace of Mother Mary, our mother and intercessor, who will speak in her own way to lead us to her son."

The good Father also stressed that the most powerful form of healing is the one that occurs through the Eucharist, because it frees Our Jesus who is the greatest healer of all. He also noted that the title "Healing Mass" is a redundancy because every Mass involves the healing power of the Eucharist.

Famed visionary

Famed visionary Julia Kim, who heads by taking time for being the ailments of others and offering it to God, will join Fr. Orbos on the Day of Healing.

Among the healing stories about Julia Kim that Fr. Orbos related involved a small healing Mass here in Manila, where one architect's skin disease suddenly disappeared. Unknown to many but Fr. Orbos and a few close friends, Julia had earlier experienced intense sickness all over her body.

The Day of Healing, however, will not only focus on spiritual and physical healing, but also healing of self, relationships and family. Among those who will join Julia and Fr. Orbos are Korygma preachers Brother Mike Joseph, Ariel Ocampo, Joe Tacorda, Gina Barcelona, Dhen Gabrillo and Adrian Pesquerdon; representatives of the Philippine Catholic Church, including Fr. Jerry Bautista, Fr. Eric Santos and Fr. Tarcisio of Ugat, and other pilgrims from Korea who have been touched by Julia.

When asked what he envisioned the greatest healing miracle for that day would be, Father Orbos replied, "That everyone who will be here will go home assured that there is a God who is in control, who loves us and helps us solve all our problems. And that we are not alone because we are all brothers and sisters!"

For more on the Day of Healing, call 4143560/7217457.

Sunday LIFESTYLE

A desperate housewife meets a gentleman and nothing happens—so unlike television

The proper stranger

By Dikki Cordero Fernando

"Hey! Did you happen to see the most beautiful girl that walked out on me?

And if you did, was she crying, crying?

Hey! If you happen to see the most beautiful girl that walked out on me, tell her I'm sorry...

Tell her I miss my lady.

Oooh-ooh-ooh wait! You tell her that I love her—"

Sung on the train from Manila to Legazpi, 1993.

All travelogues have rough years when little things grow into threatening issues second deep in pressure cooker silence. Tempers explode, there's no healing, sex is scant, each party is firmly convinced that it is the unrelenting other who ever starts the quarrels. The aggrieved, usually the female, who cannot bear the situation, may run away—for a day, three days—seldom forever.

Many years ago, in one such hurried and hurried flight, I recklessly boarded a train to Legazpi. I knew no one there, but I had visited it before with my husband and knew that there was a pale hotel, that was all I knew.

After an hour of my brooding in silence, the man opposite my train seat offered me newspaper he had finished reading. From the corner of my eye, I tried to assess the stranger. He had on a pair of wear but cheap leather shoes and was smoking a second-rate cigarette. But an expensive-looking Omega ticked of conservatism, a humble man, a teacher or a government employee. I was hesitant about getting into conversation, but after an hour the prospect of sitting in stony silence the rest of the night and a half hour, more uncomfortable trip was just too overwhelming.

He was a professor in an agricultural school. He had missed his plane and was going to Bicol to give a lecture on rural cooperatives as he periodically did. (An early 1960s?) He commented that I wasn't quite the type of person he encountered on trains. I was just a housewife, I told him.

We small-talked. Whenever the train stopped at a station, we went down with the stream of passengers to take a quick snack and stretch our legs. We walked, ballpointing on the moonlit railroad tracks which were overgrown with weeds and littered with empty cans, a dreary landscape, like the bum end of one's dreams.

Spilling it out

Have you ever had the urge to tell your troubles to a total stranger? Well, I did, in the most overflowing with sadness and droop luggage and plastic bags. (After all, I would never see him again.) The cause of the quarrel tumbled out of my like a torrent, and the attendant big and little problems, the never-ending parents of grief, and there were reminders and pieces of hurt and loss along with it. Several times he nodded, sighed. Poor guy, who had I chosen to spill my bilestud and guts out on his lap?

He told me, too, about himself. He was interested in rural development. His pharmacist wife worked as hard as himself to make both ends meet. He talked about his job and their two children and their apartment in one of the complexes. Not very interesting, he apologized. We are just ordinary people. And I remember thinking, how rare to be quite and ordinary, not to be known for anything, not to be the wife of a busy executive who faxed the corporate world for being so plastic.

When the stop came a long one, we boarded a tricycle and rode around the town, observing its characteristics, enjoying the breeze and the strange dialects. Once, we stopped by an old church and lighted candles, for for his causes and supplications, me for mine.

End of line

After half a millennium the train reached Calamba at 12 p.m. End of the line. In my innocence, I probably assumed that the train would take me straight to the hotel door. I struggled down with my canvas bag only to come with the sleepy eyed black landscape with a miserable shed lighted only by a guardian drum with a fire burning in it. (The real station was out of commission.) Everyone had scrambled out, and the only passenger jeepneys were already full and pulling away. I looked around for taxis, tuktuk, hoorfal or the likeness of the host. A small, black, low hire car was parked by the roadside, and my teammate was waving to me to board. We shared the car with an elderly couple.

He had gone, he told me, through this exact trouble many times, but this Marian had always been decided he'd never own its hallface ever once, but the car took a corner and suddenly, there the volcano was, sharply silhouetted to the full moon—a perfect cone! Involuntarily, we held hands. As soon as I became aware of it, I disengaged my hand, but there was the rest of the night before us (he was staying in the same hotel), and I didn't want to send repentant signals about that.

The sleepy personnel at the hotel desk blinked at the apparent reunion. We were very hungry. The dining room was closed, and we had some sandwiches brought up. I was afraid he'd ask us to eat them in his room, or mine, and have an unpleasant scene, but we agreed to have them on the coffee table in the empty lobby.

Goodnight

We said goodnight at the door of my room. He held out his palm, then ran off your temptations, he said, I've sensed him during the long trip. I mean have never loved that I had brought a bottle of rum. Immediately I realized what he was thinking. I laughed and shook my head and assured him that I was not the stressful type. He said he would be leaving the hotel early in the and invited me to join him for breakfast. I said no, I wouldn't possibly be awake at that hour. Thanks for everything. (But most especially for being such a nice man.)

That night I took a scalding bath, sipping neither the drawer with the rum. Waiting down my body for a long, long time. I left clean in a bleached bone. The room with its airless red lampshade was lonely and I wondered if I should phone long distance home. (I didn't.) Physically and emotionally drained, I popped a button-cozy mouth and curled up on the thin pillows like a fetus.

At 5 a.m., I was bolt upright. A must have been my vanity suddenly, I wanted to have breakfast with this stranger who had seen me only looking downright and disheveled and very grimy. I took out a light, ruffly dress and put on a bit of makeup. I found him sitting in the dining room, reading the newspaper and drinking coffee, the perfect redeem framed by the window behind him. We were delighted to see each other.

After breakfast, I decided to walk him to his bus, for what blessed thing did I have to do on this empty day in this strange town? We walked down a street that was awash with morning rain and mulled up at the wharf. We parted not since he had fished in an hotspot underneath. I knew. Later, he tucked me into a tricycle and boarded the bus for Sorsogon.

I never saw or heard from the gentle stranger again. I was glad he never followed me up (he could trace me through the photo bands) for that would have tarnished the in tatters. He was, after all, only a kind stranger on a train, and I a young, runaway wife desperately needing a weeping wall for my grief.

Sunday LIFESTYLE Home

SOME of the works of Movement X members as gathered and interpreted by Budji Layug

EXPENSIVE chairs by known Japanese and European designers become mere backdrops to Joey Yapangco's (inset) enticing bare-board installation.

Lounges like no other

Filipino designers manage to turn a supposedly mundane activity as chilling out into an art form

Text by Alex T. Vergara
Photos by Joseph Aguadi

IT WAS one hot party in more ways than one as the country's top names in architecture, furniture and interior design recently came up with their respective interpretations of a "lounge."

Manila's A-list crowd ventured offshore to the host at IKC Home Depot Lifal (for AC cools out that night or way there one or all?) as they marveled at installations and/or showrooms set up by the likes of Ike Rish, Joey Yapangco, Dan Liebaneo, Chito Ysmundo, Ricky Toledo, J. Antonio Mendoza and members of Movement X led by Budji Layug.

A total party it was as only people behind Metro Home & Entertaining, led by Chelsea Sze Asuncion and Carlo Tadlan, could think of. Organizers also tapped some of the country's leading chefs such as Jhandel Ty-Gobio, Anthony Yapangco, Philip Goldfag, Ed Quiteves, Carlo Miguel and Amor Miguel to provide the evening's food.

The featured chefs didn't whip up the usual cocktail selections, but instead prepared mini dishes designed to complement each setup. Ty-Gobio, for instance, garnished her offerings with such class ingredients as galeries and mini tapioca to echo Liebaneo's living room showcase consisting mainly of glass pieces.

In keeping with their idea of a French bordello, Toledo and Ysmundo asked Ty-Gobio to prepare chocolate goodies in such naughty shapes as lips and various parts of the human anatomy.

Radical approaches

Two schools of thought guided the designers. While Layug and Liebaneo went for more conceptual interpretations of a lounge, Gan, Yapangco, Toledo and Ysmundo opted for radical approaches that were more like installations.

Each did away with the usual lounge chairs and went for an eight-foot tall metal cylinder that echoed his idea of a garden, blobs of greenish bronze sheet doubled as garden floor.

Let from the inside, the glare

EMAN Lichauco (inset) and his glass-lining, ensemble showcase

Lounges like no other

CHITO Vijandre and Ricky Toledo exhibit new models in their idea of a French bordello with a contemporary twist

Pretzel page 02

cotton cylinder (seen on display at Kids home store in Cocoondoll 2) gave off various shapes of flora and fauna that landed on makeshift white walls and the ceiling. A play of yellow light and shadows contrasted with the stark white installation.

"Children are real planets and animals," Kids, top honcho of Galileo Design, said. "I purposely tweaked traditional expectations of urban outdoor lounge to."

Main attraction

Unlike Kids, Tupangco made use of several chairs designed by leading Japanese and European designers. But these pricey ergonomic treasure more buildings to the installation's main attraction: a meandering sculpture made of white foam board that darted from the floor before twisting and wrapping itself around each chair.

"My statement piece is a chair designed by a famous architect," said Tupangco. "I decided to do a combination of chairs, and since each chair has a different height, your orientation also changes."

Lichauco, managing director of Artisan, went for a living room showcase featuring a sofa and several armchairs made of thick and even disks of glass. To give the setup some contrast, he made use of soft, fuzzy ones in laced vases, he opted for upright glass stands dotted with white roses.

Vijandre and Toledo of Fitma found old and new elements to come up with their version of an 18th century Parisian bordello. It was a virtual flesh-and-blood exhibit, as scenes from a brothels interpreted with two models —a male and female—erring provocatively clad pair of briefs.

"We did this all in the spirit of fun," said Vijandre. "The furniture pieces are all conventional, which we had reupholstered. We weren't required to get stuff from our stores."

The live mannequins weren't naked, thank goodness, but were garbed in fetish outfits by Joey Samson. Erotic poems from the poet's books found their way on giant turquoise sheets, while a series of lingerie in different sizes dangled from the ceiling and added a touch of beach to the entire scene.

They even joked that at some classrooms fastened to the prints. Instead of leaving the figures' genitalia and other sets of the flesh exposed, the pair decided to cover them with circular sequin patches.

"It's a fusion of periods," said Toledo. "We love Baroque, and it happens to go well with bordello."

FOR Iru Kids (inset), lounging need not be a sit-down affair. The eight-foot-tall cylinder is actually a metal cutout.

Best pieces

Lareg and the use of Movement 3, which included Tina Pascle, Miki Pineda, Tony Gonzales and Al Cuevas, among others, took the event as a chance to showcase some of their best pieces. The group had the biggest space, which wisely doubled as the party's bar area.

The idea of creating a shift in an industrial setting reportedly came from the named setting Lareg, who worked with fellow designers to create a modern, yet distinctly Filipino lounge featuring the group's reinterpreted furniture and artistic pieces harnessed mostly from indigenous materials.

Pascle's mammoth and dome-like paper-and-wire chandelier glowed from the ceiling like an iridescent sun anchor. Standing underneath it was Pascle's 6-player couch on a cloud of woven palm bark, while Gonzales' award-winning Gecko chairs were scattered throughout the space. Cuevas's fiberglass planter was converted into a giant ice basket for a selection of white wine.

And where did the seemingly aloof Layag fit into all these?

"We have many designers," he said. "Aside from making the most out of the space, I had to feature each designer's work and incorporate it to be part of the setup. This (setup) is me."

The AC may have underperformed, but definitely not those designers, who managed to turn a supposedly mundane activity as chilling out into an art form.

E-mail the author at newsgeni@inquirer.com.ph

BUZZ! Layag (in white shirt and glasses) and Movement 3 fellow members

New lifestyle center opens in Ortigas

"URBAN Contemporary Setting" by Calpex Imperial

AUTOMATIC Lyerre and Bliss Fine Furniture have opened a lifestyle store at The Ortigas Home Depot, the flagship retail center of the sprawling Ortigas Town Center at the corner of Meralco and Julia Vargas Avenues.

The new store is the biggest branch to date of the open condominium that will share a 2,000-square-meter space. It will carry a complete range of appliance and electronic items, and furniture and accessories for every room in a house.

The Lifestyle Center's formal opening featured the latest designs in urban lifestyles of members of The Philippine Institute of Interior Designers (PIID) led by Robin Monroy.

The Bliss side showcases contemporary designs for six condominium units, one bedroom and study. The Automatic Corner side highlights kitchen showcase.

Designers Marivic Alonzo, Rocio Cleto, Leah Chua, Tess Gabriel, Jamie Gonzaga, Lee Herrera, Celyn Imperial, Lolit Kincel, Julie Ann de Leru, Ludette Mercado, Jane de la Paz and Emma Yong used various furniture pieces like artwork. The exhibit was under taken with the support and cooperation of Builder's Choice, Inc.: Living Style; Wall Crown Design Center; Bliss Hardwerks; Elite Arts; Kingdom Frames and Cabinet Specialists.

The new lifestyle center also offers interior design consultancy with PIID members through Bliss Interior Design Clinic.

"MODERN Kitchen" by interior designer Tess Gabriel

The center will also have an art gallery for the Saturday Group featuring, among others, the art works of Malang. Also to be featured are the works of Buds Contreras, Rina de Leon, Elsa Coruk and other visual artists.